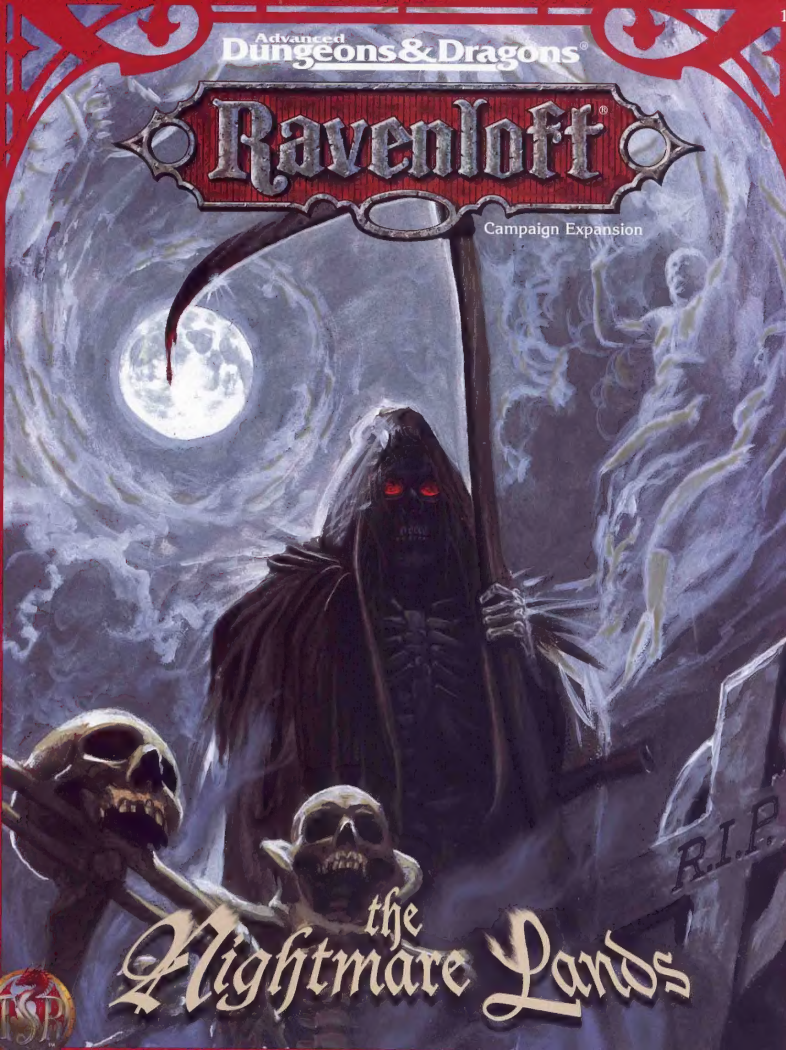
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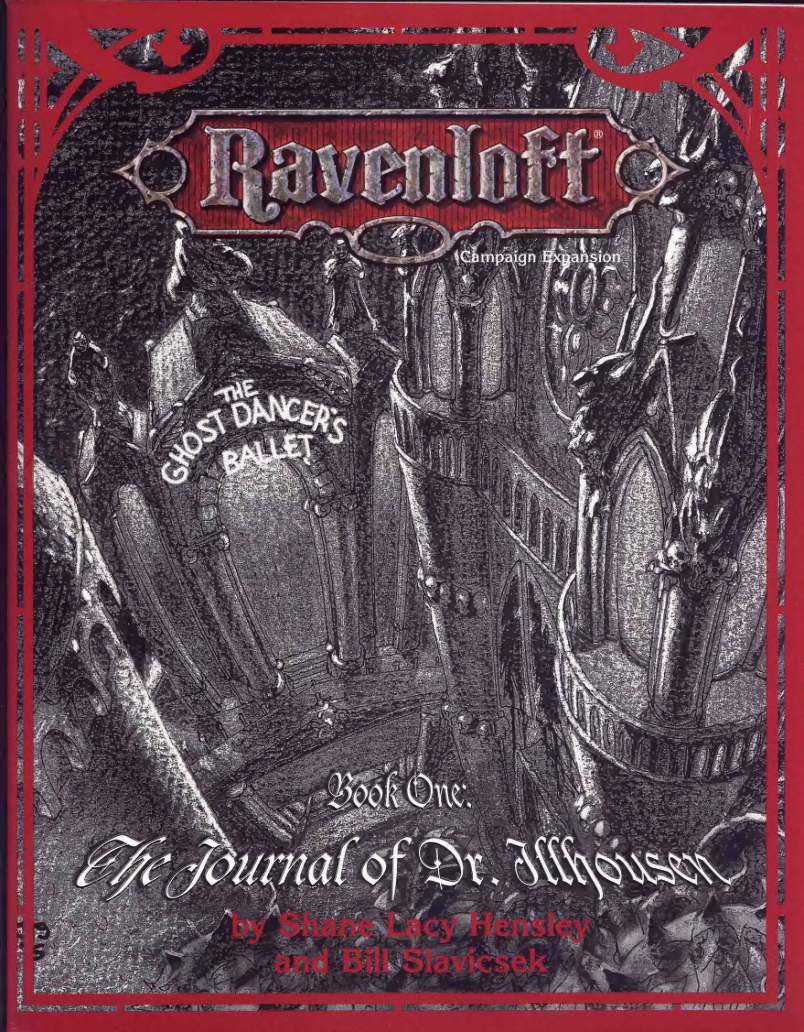

Book One:

The Journal of Dr. Illhousen

by Shane Lacy Hensley
and Bill Slavicsek

BOOK ONE:
THE JOURNAL OF DR. ILLHOUSEN

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and Bill Slavicsek

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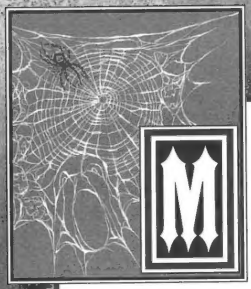


adness. That's what awaits those who venture into the Nightmare Lands. Do you value your sanity? Then you must avoid that mad place. And you must never sleep again!"
— Abukar the Insane

As I write this, night has fallen over the land, covering Nova Vaasa in a somber blanket of darkness and stars. I used to love the night, with its quiet and its solitude. Now I fear its approach, fervently hoping that the day will never end. The irony is that the night is only a symptom. The real disease accompanies sleep, that embrace that is so much like death, sneaking in as slumber claims the weary of the world.

I am Dr. Gregorian Illhousen, chief physician of the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed in Egertus, Nova Vaasa. For those who walk the ever-widening shores of madness (and Nova Vaasa has more than its share of such individuals), my clinic is often the last bastion of hope and sanity. Over the years I have made a specific study of dreams, for the majority of my patients suffer from one malady or another that seems tied not to the problems of the waking world, but to the fevered images of troubled sleep.

That brings me to the subject of this journal, and to the reason that the night terrifies me so. Through my own studies and the experiences of my patients, I have come to believe that there is another reality beyond the veil of sleep. In most cases it is a serene reality, one that we visit each and every night without ill effect. There are things that dwell in this reality, however, dark things that corrupt dreams and thrive in nightmares. If you want to know more, then keep reading.

But keep the lights on, and try not to fall asleep.

Clinic for the Mentally Distressed

If you have never visited the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed, or looked upon its gray stone walls on the bluff above the Dnar River, then I am sure you have heard tales about the place. You must understand that the foreboding walls around the grounds are a necessary precaution. Do not let the leather harnesses, metal probes, or bloody shackles trouble you, for they are the tools we use to treat the patients who come to our doors seeking aid. And the screaming? There are those who cannot help themselves, wretched souls who must express themselves in some manner. Be assured that the screaming will cease … eventually.

The clinic serves as home to some of the most troubled minds in the world. Patients arrive at the clinic from as far away as Mordent and Valachan, referred to my care by colleagues who know of and respect my work. In particular, I am sent those who suffer dreams of dread, the frightening nocturnal visions commonly called "bad dreams" or "nightmares."

Early in my career I decided to specialize in mental disorders, hoping to find ways to treat those who other physicians simply locked away. I probed the physical dimensions of both the normal and the beleaguered brain. I cataloged fears and phobias, giving names to a variety of different afflictions that had previously been grouped together and dismissed as incurable. Finally, I talked to my patients, listening to the details of their dreams. Through this process, I was able to discern patterns, recurring images that appeared in countless nocturnal visions of many different patients. I defined these images, developing a new science based on dreams and the study of other mental processes.

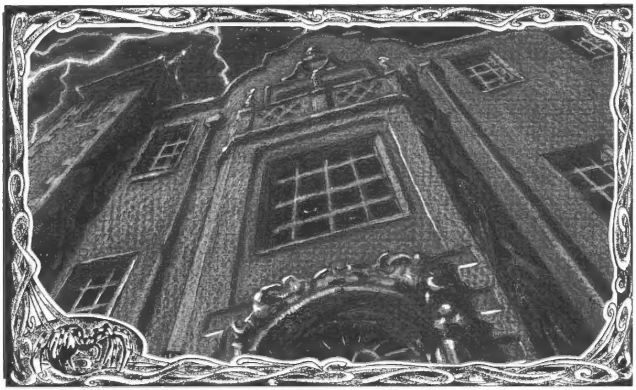
Today my work is known throughout the world, and the majority of my patients are those who suffer the ravages of terrible

nightmares. Some seek out the clinic of their own accord, while others are sent to me from other medical facilities. I have had success not only in identifying the conditions my patients suffer under, but also with treating and curing a number of those who were deemed beyond help by physicians with more traditional training. There are those, I must admit, who may never see the world beyond our walls again. These are the patients who have been specifically marked by the night, those whose battle is long and difficult, whose foe is relentless and utterly evil.

I write of this disease as though it were a thinking, malevolent being. Make no mistake—it is. In this journal, I will share with you some of the secrets I have learned. My knowledge, while impressive, is but a flickering candle in the great void of darkness that surrounds the waking world. I pass it to you so that the small flame can grow into a cleansing fire. Nurture the flame, and protect it, for it may be your only weapon when the shadows of the night press in upon you and the nightmares begin ...

The Nightmare Lands

Once there was a stretch of lifeless badlands that separated Nova Vaasa from the enshrouding mists at the edge of the known world. You, of course, know nothing of what I speak. As far as you can remember, the mists have always touched the eastern edge of our land. Your memory, however, is flawed. My friend and colleague Dr. Rudolph van Richten has shown me ancient tomes that show the badlands connected to our eastern border, and I recall walking to this area in the past. I shall not speculate on the mechanics or fiendish plots that led to the changes in our world. Such details lead to nightmares of their own. Suffice it to say, the badlands have been swallowed by the mists and lost from the surface memories



of the people of Nova Vaasa, Hazlan, and Darkon.

There is one important fact that I cannot stress enough. The place still exists. I call it the Nightmare Lands.

I learned part of the nature of the Nightmare Lands years ago when I accompanied Van Richten on one of his many journeys of exploration. If a land could be described as "alive," then the Nightmare Lands was such a place. It was not just alive, though. It was truly mad. The terrain twisted and changed from moment to moment, but never while we were watching. These changes happened at the limits of our vision, sculpting the land into weirder and weirder vistas that seemed only possible within the delusions of a troubled mind. The insanity of the place almost overwhelmed us, but we escaped with our lives and our sanity intact—barely.

It was not until some years later that I learned that the horrors of the Nightmare Lands were not confined to the eastern badlands. I discovered that they were loose in the dementia that tormented my patients and hundreds of others like them in all corners of the world.

In the Halls of Madness

As I explained earlier, much of my research has consisted of interviewing my patients to ascertain what bothers them. Some sound perfectly rational, others demented and irrational, but all hold a kernel of truth and a key to the puzzle of their madness. It was in these keys that a shocking pattern started to emerge. A significant number of my patients related common images that slowly proved themselves to be much more than the dream icons I had been cataloging.

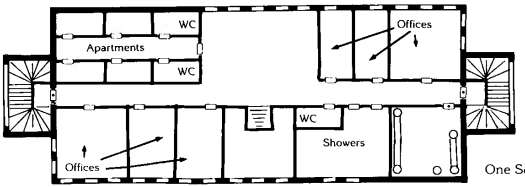
I have classified my patients in two ways; *the demented* and *the disturbed*. *The demented* have actual mental illnesses, either physical or psychological in nature, that can be treated and possibly even cured over time. *The disturbed* have no discernible internal ailments, but are instead troubled by outside forces. I can imagine the look that must be crossing your countenance upon reading these words. My friend Van Richten had a similar reaction when I first presented my theories to him. He has since accepted the truth behind these distinctions.

The Lurker in Dreams

How did I come to the conclusion that outside forces were responsible for the disturbed? As with any other scientific theory, it was achieved through long hours of research and experimentation. After subjecting a patient to every battery of tests at my disposal, from tried and true medical procedures to the new science I have developed called "psychology," when no internal cause could be determined I had to explore the possibility of an external cause. The best clues to such a possibility were evident in the ramblings of these patients.

The first clue was the nightmares. All of the patients that I would later diagnose as the disturbed suffered from extremely vivid dreams and acutely frightening nightmares. In most cases the dreams repeated themselves over and over. Sometimes they played out exactly the same every night, at other times subtle changes were introduced into a commonly occurring scene. These patients always remembered their dreams and nightmares, able to recall them in such detail that it was as though they had actually been *inside* the dream scene. After time, the dream scenes became these poor souls' realities, and I began to suspect that a reality was just what it was.

The second clue was the aberration evident in these nightmares. By aberration I mean the one dissonant chord in every disturbed patient's dream scene. I do not want to suggest



Second Floor

Key

One Square = 10 Feet

Door

Locked Door

Window

Stairs

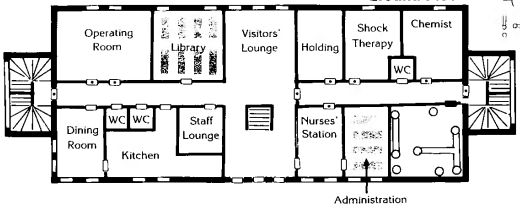
WC Water Closet

Shelves/ File Cabinets

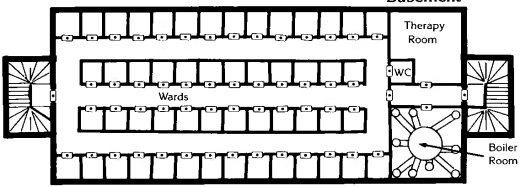
Boiler

Catwalks and Piping

The Clinic for the Mentally Distressed



Ground Floor



Basement

that these aberrations appeared from time to time. They were always present, in every single dream or nightmare described by every single patient categorized as disturbed. As an aberration, it was a portion of a dream or nightmare that did not fit with the rest of the imagery and could not be connected to any experience—real or imagined—in a disturbed patient's subconscious repertoire. And each aberration took on a specific form, that of a malevolent being.

Whether patients were housed in adjoining cells or in cells on opposite ends of the premises, they all described these beings who crawled through their dreams while not truly seeming to be part of them. These were not dream icons cooked from the same subconscious stew that assembled their nightmares. These were alien images that had no connection to the rest of their dream repertoire. My investigation revealed even more shocking news. When I asked these patients to describe those who lurked in their dreams, six distinct beings emerged. It did not matter how many patients I interviewed, the results were the same. One of these six lurkers prowled their nightmares and tormented them to such an extent that they feared the night and the sleep it would inevitably bring.

I call these lurkers the Nightmare Court, for though they never appear together in the same dream (or, indeed, a patient tormented by one never sees another), they seem to be of similar nature and from similar origins. Who are these six malevolent beings who prey on troubled souls and relish the torment they cause? I am not completely sure, but I have my theories. I will share those with you later in this journal. First, there are some other topics I need to commit to paper.

Meeting the Nightmare Court

I was still in the midst of experimentation and research when the Nightmare Court invaded my dreams. Perhaps I was getting too close to the truth, and the dream creatures wanted to stop me. Or maybe it was my close scrutiny of them that led them to notice me. Whatever the reason, it started with an event in the waking world that pushed my sleeping mind into their clawed and taloned grip.

At the time, one of my most able assistants was a young woman named Mandalain. She was a wonderful and compassionate person, and a very good friend. Her nursing skills were enhanced by the love and care she bestowed upon those she administered to. She worked at my side for three years until tragedy struck. It arrived in the form of one of my most fascinating but troublesome patients—an old man named Kerst.

I had learned a great deal from my conversations with Kerst, but was unable to sufficiently treat his nocturnal terrors. He taught me something else, though the knowledge came too late to save poor Mandalain. He taught me that these lurkers in nightmares are capable of affecting events in the waking world.

Kerst arose from one of his nightmares (though I am reluctant to say he awoke) and somehow escaped from his sanatorium cell. Urged on by the lurker in his dream, Kerst made his way to my office and took a set of scalpels from my medical bag. There were 10 blades in all, each sharpened to a keen edge. He took those blades—so beneficial in my hands, so deadly in his—and roamed the halls of the clinic until he found poor Mandalain. Then he used each blade in turn, cutting her life short with vicious, angry slashes. I found the both of them when I made my rounds later that night. Kerst was weeping and screaming in terror, as though he had just awakened from one of his

nightmares. And Mandalain, poor Mandalain, was lying on the floor, 10 silver handles jutting from her body, her white uniform stark and somehow out of place in the pool of red spreading around her.

The next evening, my own nightmares began. At first the scene was simple. I heard Mandalain calling to me from somewhere within the darkened halls of the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed. I tried to find her, but I couldn't locate her in the darkness. I awoke in a sweat, disturbed by the dream but certain it was simply a result of so traumatic an event as the one that had just transpired. However, instead of diminishing, the dreams only got worse as the weeks passed.

From calls for help that I could not answer to accusations that I had let her die, listening to her haunting voice in the darkness of the dream clinic was almost more than I could bear. Then, a little each night, the darkness began to brighten, and Mandalain appeared physically in my dreams. She looked much the same as when I found her—her white uniform torn and soaked with blood, her eyes nothing more than shadowy pools. Worse, her fingers were no longer the thin, beautifully sculpted digits that had dispensed medicine to the patients but were instead my 10 scalpels, sharp and clattering at the ends of her pale hands. For many nights in a row, I would awaken as she slowly moved closer and closer. Then the dreams would end with a single touch of those cutting fingers. More nights passed, and it became harder and harder to wake up, no matter how many times she caressed me with those cool, cutting blades.

I believe I would have lapsed into a coma and never returned to the waking world had these night visions continued. Luckily, on the last night that Mandalain's ghost visited my dreams, I noticed an aberration that was as jarring as it was intriguing. Near the limits of my peripheral vision stood a being in tattered robes. A hood hid his features, though I could

see slivers of white hair spilling from the shadowy folds. This lurker was watching the events of my nightmare with fascination, and I, in turn, was watching him. I ignored the bite of the scalpel-fingers by focusing on the details of this strange being. His hands were gnarled, almost skeletal in nature, and they opened and closed in rhythm to Mandalain's slashes. I also noticed that *things* were moving along the hem of his robes. They were spiders of some sort, moving excitedly over the fabric and even entering and exiting the folds of the hood without bothering the lurker in any way. I gave this dream lurker a name, and I believe that, for me, this act led to the end of my nightmares of Mandalain.

I named him the Nightmare Man.

Beyond the Halls of Madness

In the early days of the clinic, before my work load became so great as to prohibit it, I would sometimes travel to far-off locations in order to help those suffering from mental distress. It was right after my dream encounter with the Nightmare Man that I was asked to visit a hunter in the Briarweed Forest. The problem was that the hunter and his family were having terrible dreams. The twist was that they were all having the *same* terrible dreams.

As in my own case, the dreams began after a personal tragedy occurred. The tragedy here was the death of the hunter's wife. Upon examining and interviewing the family, I learned that the hunter and his four children (who ranged in age from 3 to 14 years old) were having the same nightmare at the same time every night. Allow me to emphasize this—*they were sharing the very same nightmare simultaneously, for they were all present and able to communicate in the dream scene.* I found this intriguing, for the hunter and his children slept in separate rooms and had no obvious way to fake such communication. Still, I needed to witness their sleep behavior myself, so I bade them go about their normal evening routine while I silently observed.

For the first two hours after the family members retired to their separate rooms, I watched as they struggled to fall asleep. Then, when sleep finally claimed them, I was forced to listen to the hunter's loud, obnoxious snoring that effectively drowned out the gentle breathing of the children. By the fifth hour I was certain that nothing strange would occur this night. I was about to curl up in a chair and get some sleep myself when I noticed a change in the house. The hunter's snoring had stopped. I looked into his room. The hunter was still lying across his bed, eyes closed, his breathing calm and regular. He appeared to be asleep, but I heard him whisper, "Do you see him, Kasha, hiding behind Mother's chair?"

The whisper was so low that I almost missed it. The hunter had spoken his oldest daughter's name, as though he was conversing with her in his dream. I quietly moved to the girl's room to see if anything was transpiring there. Kasha was also asleep, whispering in the same manner as her father. "Father," she said quietly, though I could detect fear in her voice, "is it Mother? No, Father, that isn't Mother! Look at the spiders!"

My blood turned cold and a chill crawled up my back as I heard the girl's words. They were actually speaking to each other, experiencing the same dream at the same time. But more than that, the image of spiders brought the memory of my first meeting with the Nightmare Man firmly to the forefront of my mind. "Why is he wearing a hood, Father?" the youngest daughter, Karina, whined suddenly, "What does the spider man want?"

How could this be possible, I wondered? How could this family be sharing the same dream *and* be haunted by the same lurker who had

invaded my dreams? The only explanation that made any sense was that there were lurkers that possessed a reality separate and distinct from a sleeper's dreams. These beings had to be able to leap from dream to dream, living in the dimension of sleep between them and surviving off the torment and nightmares they inspired. This explanation was not correct, at least not entirely, though I did not realize it at the time. Only later, after more research, did I learn the truth.

The creatures of the Nightmare Court do not enter our dreams, at least not for any length of time. Instead, they draw our sleeping minds elsewhere, to a realm of darkest shadows where the maddest illusions are as real and substantial as the physical bodies tossing and turning in our beds.

The Secret Revealed

Before you read more of my journal, I must warn you that the creatures of the Nightmare Court are not the forgiving sort. Should they learn that you know their secret, or that you have meddled in their nocturnal affairs, then your sanity—perhaps your very life—will be at stake. Tread lightly and do not venture beyond the Veil of Sleep to this shadow domain if your will is not strong and resolute. If you do lose your sanity, though, fear not. There will always be room in my clinic for those who suffer the torment of dark dreams.

From the humble beginnings I shared with you above, my research led me to this conclusion—dreams and nightmares have their own realities, though some are more real than others. Beyond this, there are *things* that live in these realities, creatures whose very existence may be the basis for many of the myths and legends of old. Of these creatures, I must warn you about an insidious group that I call the Nightmare Court. The members of the Court have the ability to draw a sleeper out of his own dream and into a dream of their making, under their control. Moreover, the members of the Nightmare Court have a physical reality in a physical domain that can be entered just as you or I could travel to Barovia or Tepest. Where is this domain? It is very close, just beyond the mists, in the forgotten place called the Nightmare Lands.

You have read these words correctly. Not only can you travel physically into this domain, but it is possible to travel there in your dreams and nightmares as well. Many of the patients at my clinic are unwilling visitors to the Nightmare Lands, their minds reluctantly drawn there every time sleep overtakes them. Once there, they serve to amuse and nourish the Nightmare Court. Pray you never have to take such a trip.

Those of you familiar with the writings of my good friend Dr. Rudolph van Richten may have a pertinent question concerning the secret I have just revealed. Is it not Van Richten's thesis that the powers of worst evils of the world are limited by distance? I am not here to dispute Van Richten's findings, only to share with you my own: The Nightmare Court can reach beyond the Nightmare Lands to capture sleeping minds and take them back to the shadows of the dark domain. Distance is not a limitation to the worst evils of the Nightmare Lands.

CHAPTER II: THE DENIZENS OF NIGHTMARES

ou want to learn about the Nightmare Court? But why? To talk about them is to attract their vile attention."

—A disturbed patient

The three key postulates of my research are that dreams and nightmares have their own level of reality; that creatures live within this reality; and that there is a place where this reality imposes itself on our own. That place is the Nightmare Lands.

The Nightmare Lands are not strictly physical, at least not the way that Nova Vaasa is. In some way that I cannot yet explain, the physical realm of the Nightmare Lands is somehow merged with the dream reality that is usually only accessible to the rest of us when we sleep—and then only in a limited manner. This is what gives the place its malleable, ever-shifting form. I will write more on the subject of the Nightmare Lands itself later in this journal. Before I can speak of the denizens who reside there, however, I must describe two terrain types that have little resemblance to physical reality: Dreamscapes and the terrain between waking and sleep.

Dreamscapes are pocket dimensions within the Nightmare Lands, self-contained portions of the dream reality. The members of the Nightmare Court use these dreamscapes to imprison the dreamers they capture. Within these controlled settings, a dreamer's visions and nightmares play out according to the manipulations of the Nightmare Court.

The rest of the Nightmare Lands consists of places where dream reality spills over into the physical world. I refer to this as the *Terrain Between*—between night and day, between the waking world and sleep, between the real and the surreal. It has properties of both worlds, for its shape is as solid as any reality we may know, but its form is as fleeting and malleable as a dream.

Common and Controlled Dreams

I must stress that not every nightmare you experience is a result of the Nightmare Court. Indeed, most people never suffer the horrors of these vile creatures of slumber. It is normal to dream every night, and sometimes these dreams may take frightening turns. It is even common to dream the same dream every so often, or to experience the same nightmare on different occasions. With this in mind, how do you tell the difference between normal nocturnal musings and a visit to the Nightmare Lands? It is not easy, but there are several signs to look for. These are described below.

Recurring Night Terrors. Nightmares that occur regularly and on an increasingly more frequent schedule could be the work of a denizen of the Nightmare Court. If the nightmares begin after a particularly traumatic experience and are in some way tied to the experience's events, this adds more plausibility to the Nightmare Court's involvement.

The Nature of the Dreams. Bad dreams are common in and of themselves, but rarely do they cause serious or prolonged emotional distress. To the contrary, nightmares usually have cathartic effects. The night terrors inspired by the Nightmare Court, however, diverge from this norm. They slowly cause more and more mental distress because they do not purge foul emotions. Instead, they strengthen them, making them fester and grow, wearing down the dreamer by eliminating the benefits of restful sleep.

Dreams instigated by the Nightmare Court also tend to grow more terrible over time. Scenes slowly develop and change to increase the level of horror, thereby allowing the nightmares to affect the dreamers even in their

wakeful states. The chains that bind the captured dreamers become tighter and more entangled with every new twist introduced in the unfolding nightmares—a process that could take months or even years. And throughout this terrible period, the captured dreamers experience frequent, troubling dreams.

The State of the Dreamer. Those who receive the attention of the Nightmare Court suffer both mentally and physically from their nocturnal travels to the Nightmare Lands. Upon waking, a dreamer in the grip of a member of the Nightmare Court appears haggard. In time, his physical condition declines: he becomes gaunt, listless, weak, and pale. At the same time, his mind deteriorates. Paranoia becomes more and more pronounced. Tension builds as his mind and body cry for the rest they are denied. Eventually, madness overtakes him, and he becomes one of the disturbed. If left to the devices of the Nightmare Court, such an individual first loses his mind, then his health fails, and finally death claims him.

Visitors to the Nightmare Lands

Two types of visitors travel the mad domain known as the Nightmare Lands. The first type are *dreamers*. Dreamers are those who fall asleep in the physical, waking world with which we are all familiar. Their physical bodies remain in the waking world, while their minds enter the Nightmare Lands. The second type I call *wanderers*. Wanderers are those who physically travel to the Nightmare Lands, crossing the misty border in the same manner as you or I would step from Nova Vaasa to Hazlan.

Dreamers

Dreamers have their own reality. Normally, a sleeping mind floats beyond the Veil of Sleep where it participates in normal, healthy dreams and nightmares. When a dreamer is drawn to the Nightmare Lands, normal and healthy no longer apply.

In the Nightmare Lands, a dreamer is either confined to a dreamscape or allowed to roam the Terrain Between. The reality of each situation is explained below.

In a dreamscape, a dreamer appears as a physical entity who can interact with the dream scene playing out around him. A dreamscape needs a specific dreamer to serve as the engine that keeps the dreamscape coherent and provides the raw material from which the dream scene is created. I call a specific dreamer bound to a specific dreamscape a *seed*, for it is his subconscious icons and phobias from which the dream scene blossoms.

In the Terrain Between a dreamer still has physical substance, but it is of a flimsier, more ethereal nature. A dreamer in the Terrain Between appears almost ghostlike, more solid toward his center while his extremities are wispy and vaporous. While a dreamer in this region can interact with the environment, he has a tougher time doing so because of his tendency to lose physical coherence every time the land changes. In this region of the Nightmare Lands, a dreamer does not provide the energy and substance of a dream scene. Instead, the dreamer is lost in a place of endlessly changing scenes, and any energy he exerts flows directly into the members of the Nightmare Court.

Dreamers can also be drawn into a dream scene powered by another dreamer. Sometimes a sleeping mind will cross into the Nightmare Lands on its own, either accidentally or for a specific purpose, and wind up inside a dreamscape currently occupied by a seed. This happens, for example, when those who have ties to a disturbed mind try to travel with it to the place beyond sleep in order to help it break free of the Nightmare Court's influence.

Wanderers

Wanderers maintain the reality of the waking world when they physically cross the border into the Nightmare Lands. This, however, is not as easily accomplished as it once was. Once you could walk or ride from Nova Vaasa to this dark land, but those days are gone. Today the Nightmare Lands is difficult to locate. Where the two realms used to meet, now thick mist rises to blot out the land. The mists that define the edge of the known world make travel difficult and direction almost meaningless. Beyond that, between the place where Nova Vaasa ends and the Nightmare Lands begins is a stretch of dangerous water where sharp rocks hide just beneath the tumultuous surface.

Wanderers can enter the dreamscapes, but once inside they become partially insubstantial—less real than the dream stuff around them. This does not mean that a wanderer is safe within a dreamscape, but it does mean that he will have a more difficult time dealing with any hazards that come his way. To escape from a dreamscape, a wanderer must discover an exit. This often involves deciphering the dream icons spawned by the captive seed.

In the Terrain Between, where the land is a mix of dream and wakefulness, a wanderer has an easier time of it than a dreamer, for his physicality never fails him. His mind, however, might. In a place where nothing is as it seems and reality might fail at any moment, sanity can become a fragile thing. Except for the shifting terrain and the maddening illusions, the Terrain Between is as substantial as the waking world—in fact, I believe it to be a part of the waking world that exists very close to the dream world, and the stuff of dreams constantly spills over to affect the land.

The Nightmare Court

The Nightmare Court's members may be the masons of their mad land, but their victims provide the mortar and the bricks. I believe that the creatures who make up the Nightmare Court have no dreams of their own. Instead, they must steal the dreams of others to receive respite from the fatigue of normal activity. I also believe that the Nightmare Court feeds on dreams and the terror inspired by nightmares like the vampires of legend feast on the blood of their victims. (Of course, my colleague Dr. Van Richten insists that vampires possess the same reality as the Nightmare Court, but that is a debate best left for another time.)

I cannot tell you how the Nightmare Court came to be, and I can tell you even less about the malevolent entity that heads this august and sinister body. What little information I have gathered comes from interviews conducted with my patients. Over the years I have compiled bits and pieces of this macabre puzzle, but parts are still missing, shrouded in mists that I believe will never part. Those pieces I have gathered are enough to provide a glimpse of the entities who rule the dark domain, but little else. I can name these beings and warn you of their particular tricks and devices, but you must remember that much of my work is speculation. Moreover, it is speculation based on the ravings of those the rest of society marks as insane.

The Nature of the Court

The Nightmare Court is like a giant spider sitting at the center of a webwork of dreams and nightmares. The tendrils of the web reach out to all the world, touching the passions and pathos of every sentient being that dreams. If one of my most troubled patients is to be believed, some tendrils even reach to other worlds.

Where the webs connect, the sticky strands entangle a dreamer's most vivid fears and drag him into the Nightmare Lands. There the members of the Court sort through the images of the captive's mind, looking for just the right dream to spark the creation of a dreamscape and satisfy their unique appetites.

Of the many dreamers intercepted by these fiends each night, only the most troubled are chosen for lasting captivity. The rest are released after suffering the slightest touch of one of the Court's denizens. (I believe that those who awake tired and groggy after a full night's sleep represent those who were selected by the Nightmare Court—and then released for whatever reason.)

Fantastic musings, extreme trauma, or inhuman grief are some of the criteria the Court uses to determine which dreamer should be bound and which set free. The hunter of Briarweed Forest, whose case first alerted me to the true extent of the Court's range of influence, was undoubtedly chosen because of his great love and tremendous grief for his recently lost wife. She had meant everything to the hunter, and when she fell prey to a hideous beast of the forest, he felt himself responsible. His lamentation was strong enough to color his dreams, and it was these grief-stricken hues that attracted the attention of the Nightmare Court.

Members of the Nightmare Court

As of this writing, I have identified six members of the Nightmare Court. At the head of the court sits the mysterious Nightmare Man, who I believe rules over the other members. The other members I have named Morpheus, Hypnos, Mullonga, the Ghost Dancer, and the Rainbow Serpent. Each has his or her own specialty when it comes to selecting dream seeds and creating dreamscapes. Remember that these are guidelines only, however. A dreamer plagued by guilt, normally an emotion cherished by the Ghost Dancer, may just as well find himself in Morpheus's clutches if something in the dreamer's mind catches that vile being's attention. Still, knowing these guidelines can help identify which lurker is manipulating a person's dreams, and that is the first step toward overcoming the fiend.

It is extremely rare for a dreamer to readily spot the lurker in his dreams. I am fortunate, in a sense, to have so many of the disturbed under my care. This allows me to draw upon a large number of samples as I compare and contrast the data. Still, with all the cases I have treated both at the clinic and while traveling abroad, I have interviewed only a handful of people who have actually seen a lurker in their dreams (or at least recognized a lurker as such). There are fewer still who have interacted with the lurkers in some way, as the lurkers do not usually step forward and identify themselves—something so abrupt would not suit the subtle trappings of their natures.

By carefully comparing many dreams, however, I have determined that certain recurring images are incarnations of the Nightmare Court. It took even more years of comparative research to identify their motives and peculiar methods. Remember, though, that the peculiarities I assign to the various villains are *trends* that I have spotted over the years. There are almost as many exceptions as there are rules, so do not count on identifying a lurker too quickly. The tricks of the Nightmare Court are legion.

The Nightmare Man

The Nightmare Man, a mysterious entity of malignant purpose, sits at the head of the Nightmare Court. I suspect that he (it?) is as mad as the land he lords over. While I have no concrete evidence that the Nightmare Man is the lord of this domain or even the leader of the

Court, my instincts tell me that he is. Perhaps he is merely another member of the Court whom I have mistakenly identified as its leader, but that does not feel right.

My good friend Dr. Rudolph van Richten once debated the nature of the Nightmare Man with me at some length. He has theories of his own about the relationship of specific portions of our world with the evil that dwells there. If the Nightmare Man is truly the master of the Nightmare Lands, then his Court wields exceptional power and independence compared to the lackeys of other evil entities. Van Richten theorized that perhaps the Court is merely an extension of the Nightmare Man himself, each member representing some facet of the Nightmare Man's personality and given independent life to serve his will. It is hard to believe, but no harder than imagining a world where the land and the environment change as fast as a thought.

I have recorded only a few incidents directly involving the Nightmare Man. Rarely does he participate directly in a dreamscape—at least as far as I know. Some of my patients have occasionally seen him in dreamscapes where another member of the Court already lurks. Is the Nightmare Man checking up on his minion's work? It would appear so.

The Nightmare Man appears as a mysterious figure in dark, tattered robes. A hood always covers his head and face, though usually wisps of long silver hair are observed spilling from the hood's shadow-filled opening. His hands—the only portion of his anatomy ever revealed to dreamers—emerge from the sleeves of his robe as gnarled, pale appendages that are more bone than flesh. The robes appear to be made of spider web, and dozens of large, black spiders crawl over its tattered surface, constantly weaving more web to keep the robes from fraying apart.

Except for my own experience with the Nightmare Man and the few incidents recounted by my patients, the leader of the Nightmare Court remains an enigma. I do not know him nearly as well as I know the rest of his associates. I think he prefers it that way. I will continue to seek information concerning this entity, for as long as he remains a mystery the key to saving his victims will always be just out of reach. So that you do not read on without learning at least something about this being, I have recorded the following dream. It was told to me by one of my patients, a young woman I shall call Elizabeth.

Elizabeth's Dream

I was walking the dark halls of a grim cathedral. Set into the walls were huge stained glass windows depicting the most violent, sinister, and terrible scenes one can imagine. Some even moved *as I watched!*

I turned away from the macabre scenes in revulsion and saw what appeared to be a monk sitting before an easel. I considered him to be a monk because of the place I was in and because of the hooded robe he wore. On the canvas set upon the easel was a terrible painting. It showed a young man viciously attacking a beautiful woman. Jagged, black nails had grown from the man's fingertips and were raking terrible furrows in the woman's neck. As I watched, the artist dipped his brush in a crimson splotch of paint and put it to the canvas. The paint seemed unusually wet, for it dripped down the woman's neck just like the blood it was to represent. I could hold back my contempt for this grim artist no longer. "That is a horrible scene!" I scolded.

The monk did not turn toward me, so I could not see the face hidden within his dirty gray robe. "Is it?" *he asked in a low, raspy voice.* "I had not noticed. But what do you think of the work itself? Is it not clear? Does the sheen of the blood not properly reflect the pale moonlight? Do her lips not seem to mouth his name over and over in disbelief?"

I watched in horror as the brush, which he had not touched to the palette again, continued to ooze red paint onto the canvas—making it seem as if the man's fingers were tightening on the woman's throat. I was unnerved, but I could not bring myself to turn away. "Yes," *I agreed,* "the detail is incredible. But why do you paint such madness? Why show evil when there is so much more that is beautiful and good?"

The monk-artist shuddered and I felt a cold draft that made me shiver as well. "A world of beauty?" *he asked.* "Where? Can you show me where?"

The monk-artist pointed to the stained glass windows. Now they were segmented into hundreds of panes, each one showing some sort of tragedy or horror. The images were moving and, if I concentrated, I believed I could even hear haunting screams. Scores of innocent men and women were being betrayed, stalked, or even murdered, and I could truly find nothing good to show the monk-artist.

"You see?" *he continued.* "Love and beauty no longer exist here. So I must look into the night to find other inspiration. Do you understand?" *At that, the monk-artist stood and wiped his stained hands on his tattered robe. A black splotch on the robe moved, and a dozen black spiders scurried into the folds. That is when I finally recognized the people in the painting. The man was my beloved Herman, and the woman was ... me! Indeed, the people in every horrible scene in every pane of stained glass were us, the lovers Herman and Elizabeth, engaged in mad dances of violence, each more gruesome than the one before.*

It was always at this point in the dream that Elizabeth awakened. I cannot tell you for sure that this was the Nightmare Man, but I believe that it was. As for Elizabeth, she remains in my

care. Her nightmare still haunts her, and I think that it always will. It has to do with guilt—for Elizabeth murdered her beloved Herman on their wedding night, inspired to such violence by the nocturnal whispers of the being I call the Nightmare Man.

The Ghost Dancer

Skin of ivory, eyes bathed in blackest shadow, pale bloodstains on a faded ballerina costume. These are the images associated with the Court's most tragic member, a nameless specter known only as the Ghost Dancer. The eerie Ghost Dancer pirouettes mournfully in the shadows of grim dreams. She is an omen of dread. The Dancer's tattered garb and the strange bloody hand prints upon them hint that this sad creature has a history as tragic as the dream images that sustain her, though I know none of the details.

Brave heroes who could not complete some dire quest, desperate souls who have failed their loved ones, and anyone racked by the cold pangs of guilt are drawn into her deceitful dreamscapes. If only I could reach the elusive Ghost Dancer, speak to her, perhaps I could find out why she performs her ballet to the tunes of the selfish and the guilt-ridden.

Exaggerated guilt given life is the maudlin Ghost Dancer's primary tool, bombarding the psyche of her victims in steadily increasing waves of pain and remorse. Her dreamscapes often seem little different from the world we live in, at least at first. Her victims rarely even realize that they are dreaming. Then strange events begin to occur. Loved ones thought lost or hopes believed crushed reappear, though always just out of reach. Each episode brings the prize closer, but also hints that something is terribly wrong. A troubled dreamer may realize the horrors he has suffered are taking place within his dreams, but by then it is too late. The promised prize finally arrives, bringing with it all the blame and guilt of the victim's subconscious. The tragedy ends as the dream seed falls prey to whatever creature champions the Ghost Dancer's dark ballet.

Consider the case of Elswick, a young elf from Helbenik in Valachan. Elswick's love, a girl named Zarana, lay dying in her father's bed of some dire illness. The village priest told Elswick that only a flower found in the southern hills could save Zarana's life. The young hero embarked on his journey without hesitation. Along the way he encountered many savage beasts and hideous creatures, but somehow he managed to defeat or escape them all.

Elswick retrieved the flower and was on his way back to Zarana when he came upon a kindly stranger. The stranger said that she had heard of Elswick, and that he had defeated many fiends in recent days. Elswick, filled with pride, said that he had. The stranger then pointed to a forlorn keep high on a hill above them. She said that a monster had recently taken refuge in those ruins, and that if it was not destroyed now, it would grow more powerful and eventually wreak havoc on the nearby villages. Elswick bravely said that he would deal with this menace, and spurred his great charger up the hill.

Unfortunately, the monster was much stronger than Elswick had anticipated. While he survived the encounter and managed to stagger back to the closest town, he lay unable to move for several days. When he finally came to his senses, he realized that Zarana was still depending on the rare flower that he was to deliver. He patched his wounds as best he could and rode back to Helbenik, but it was too late. Zarana had died two days prior.

Elswick wept for days before finally falling into a deep, fitful sleep. His nightmares were filled with thoughts of Zarana's suffering, waiting patiently for a savior that would never come. The Ghost Dancer noticed the lover's

grieving nightmares and drew him into a macabre dreamscape. Now Elswick relives this sad tale nightly. He searches for the flower that will save his love, and when he finds it he is somehow sidetracked once again. When Elswick realizes his mistake, it is always too late—Zarana is dead again.

Some nights Elswick experiences a different dream. Sometimes he wanders through the Valachan night chased by a ghostly specter. The phantom wafts behind him, always drawing closer if Elswick slows his pace. The spirit moans that she is Zarana, and that Elswick's pride caused her death. This, in turn, fills the elf with guilt and remorse of such a terrible level that he can barely endure it.

Such is the broth that the Ghost Dancer craves.

Morpheus

Those who have seen the nightmare denizen I call Morpheus describe him as a red-skinned, powerful male with dark hair and eyes, a thin mustache, and pointed ears. The lower half of his body tapers off into vaporous trails, while he adorns his upper half with an expensive, formal, and finely tailored suit.

This member of the Nightmare Court specializes in dreamscapes where people, places, and things are in a constant state of change. His victims are those who have suffered deep trauma over witnessing or experiencing some terrible event. Seeing the horrible death of a loved one, witnessing a gruesome slaying, or succumbing to terrible shock after experiencing such an event are all apt to trigger the sort of nightmares that Morpheus prefers.

Visitors to Morpheus's dreamscapes are subjected to an alien and often changing landscape. A world nearly covered in water one moment could become a baking desert the next. Sometimes even the visitor is transformed into other people, animals, or entities. The villain obviously believes this constant bombardment on a victim's already troubled psyche is the way to elicit the particular sort of trauma that he feeds upon.

A nightmare need not be triggered by something so traumatic as death. One of my patients complained that his wife was always eating, and had become an unattractive glutton. In his dream, Morpheus transformed the wife into an exaggerated and crueler version of herself. She sat on her great bed of greasy pillows, surrounded by pies, cakes, and half-cooked pheasants. Between mouthfuls of food she would scream for her husband to bring her more.

Eventually there was no more food in the house and the man groveled before his wife, pleading with her not to eat any more. To his surprise, she rose from the bed and stuck him with a wicked fork. A bloody piece of his flesh hung from the tool and, to his horror, she stuffed it into her food-stained mouth. For the rest of the dream this bloated, lumbering parody of his wife chased him about the house, here and there stabbing him with her gory fork and devouring him one piece at a time.

Until I found a way to treat this man, the only one getting fat from his nightmare was the gluttonous Morpheus, a creature who revels in the confusion and change inspired by misery.

Hypnos

The creature I call Hypnos always appears as an intellectual gentleman of upper-class status in those rare instances when he allows himself to be seen. He is a tall man who dresses in the most impeccably tailored suits. His black hair is always perfectly styled, and his thick mustache is always neat. A monocle connected to his vest pocket by a gold chain covers his right eye. The unusual thing about Hypnos is that he always looks as though he is

asleep or possibly even dead. He is always seen in a coffin made of clear glass, resting with his arms crossed and his left eye closed. His right eye, though, the one behind the monocle, is open wide and full of maniacal light.

Hypnos favors dreams of frustration and inadequacy. Dreamers who cannot outrun their pursuers or who attack with no force could be in a dilemma choreographed by Hypnos. When this member of the Nightmare Court creates a dreamscape, the seed's feelings of helplessness or of being overpowered by the obstacles around him are amplified a hundred fold. Monsters grow larger and stronger, opponents are quicker or smarter, and one's own actions seem perpetually doomed to failure.

Besides these obvious physical dilemmas, many of Hypnos's victims also find themselves embarrassed or humiliated. Sometimes a person wanders into the street without clothing, or commits some horrible *faux pas* while in the presence of a great person he admires. While these situations are not as threatening as dreaming one's own death, they are quite capable of creating mental distress. It may take many years for a person to recover the esteem Hypnos steals from him—years enough to wreck a life forever.

Hypnos is a cold and calculating planner. He allows his prey to sense the evil that is building on the horizon, languishing in the knowledge that they must eventually confront it. Often the events of the dream mimic upcoming events in the waking world, making the dreamer even more nervous when the time comes to perform. Performing the waking event successfully is no guarantee that Hypnos will leave the dreamer alone. Indeed, his reward is often to be dragged back into the dreamscape again and again when sleep returns.

Trials become more difficult with each dream, and Hypnos increases the possibility of failure by throwing additional obstacles at his dream seeds. Weapons become ineffectual, important items are lost at the most inopportune time, and even running away becomes impossible as feet turn to lead. Even in less lethal dream scenes, Hypnos enjoys frustrating his victims. Handsome knights become insecure cowards. Intellectuals, such as mages and priests, often find that they cannot remember the most simple and basic of spells. Even nimble rogues become clumsy bumblers who can barely climb ladders or walk without tripping.

The villains of the Nightmare Court have little power in the waking world beyond the influence exerted on the dreamers they torment. This does not mean they are helpless, however. Besides feyrs and other abominations that I will discuss shortly, the Court may have other powers and allies available to them that I have not yet categorized. Hypnos, for example, has some influence outside the dream plane as I have discovered over the years.

Hypnos is a master of mesmerism. On occasion, I have seen him implant a hypnotic suggestion in a dreamer's mind that is triggered some time after waking. Several of my patients, for example, have been commanded to slay me at the earliest opportunity. Most proved woefully inadequate to the task, or were otherwise detained by the efforts of the clinic's staff.

One woman, whom I had underestimated, came close to fulfilling Hypnos's dark suggestion. Fortunately, her desire to do me bodily harm must have been slight, for she could not go through with her scheme at the last moment. This proves to me that Hypnos's power is common mesmerism rather than some sort of magical control, for it suffers from the same limitation as normal hypnosis—a person may not be induced to commit an action diametrically opposed to his normal mores or beliefs.

The Frustrated

The marshal of Egertus often employs bands of adventurers to deal with the many horrors that threaten Nova Vaasa. One of these men was a cleric named Terlos. He, along with a warrior and a mage, were once hired to purge a local mausoleum of a terrible were-beast. The three heroes entered the crypt, but only Terlos stumbled out several hours later. The priest claimed that the were-beast was destroyed, but his friends had not survived the encounter.

Though the people grieved for the heroes, Terlos's reputation grew for surviving such a terrible ordeal. The local order of friars made him an honorary brethren, and several wealthy citizens bestowed him with generous rewards. But Terlos was miserable. His eyes were bloodshot and framed by dark circles, and he became nervous and irritable. Most suspected that he grieved for his lost friends, but the truth was far more tragic.

When Terlos could no longer handle the pressure, he came to me to reveal his terrible story. He knew that he was not of sufficient experience to defeat a were-beast, and had cowered behind a casket while his friends had fought the thing. He saw them fall and then retreated from the crypt in terror. When he emerged, everyone assumed him a hero. Terlos believes that the beast was destroyed as the last of his friends died, but he cannot be completely sure.

His nightmares began that very night.

Every time Terlos went to sleep, he faced that awful crypt and the thing that dwelled within it. At first, the dreams were replays of what had happened. Later on, his friends called to him in agony as he ran. Then they began to call him a coward. As he ran from the crypt and slammed the doors, he could hear them scratching at the inside. In the next dream, Terlos and his friends again delved into the crypt, but this time he knew what would happen from the very beginning. He knew that his friends would die, and that their corpses would rise and chase after him. He tried to change fate; to stand and fight the horrible were-beast, but his muscles seemed stiff and his reflexes slow. Terlos managed to strike the beast with his silver-tipped staff once, but it barely noticed the blow before sending him flying across the room with a swipe of its clawed hand.

I attempted to help the cleric, but he was a wreck both emotionally and physically. He had not slept in days as he tried to avoid the nightmares, and his mind was a playground for guilt, frustration, and paranoia. Finally, the priest did fall into a deep sleep, and whatever happened to him that last night snapped his mind like a branch in a strong wind. If you listen carefully, you might hear his screams coming from the cells in the bowels of the clinic.

I cannot be certain, but I believe that he has fallen to Hypnos's dread powers.

Mullonga

Mullonga appears as a hunched, leathery, brown-skinned witch dressed in animal skins and carrying a gnarled staff. Her eyes are clear and deep, peering out from the wrinkled folds of her dark skin. She may seem to be a primitive shaman of some sort, an aboriginal old woman who is so small as to be harmless, but she is neither of these things. She is evil and malicious.

This villain thrives on fear and apprehension. Her dreamscapes are sinister, foreboding places, often devoid of other inhabitants save those with sinister intent. Dream seeds who suffer from terrible phobias are the fodder of Mullonga's voracious appetite.

There are many things to be afraid of across the land, but when that fear controls you, or paralyzes you even when not confronted by its

source, you may fall prey to the machinations of Mullonga. Even such simple fears as the fear of common animals or speaking to crowds may be twisted into a horrible dreamscape by this member of the Nightmare Court.

The witch puts her victims into bizarre, twisted dreamscapes filled with representations of whatever they fear the most. Worse, while the source of the phobia may be everywhere, it will likely be some time before the prey encounters it. Mullonga cackles gleefully while her victims fervidly hope to avoid the things they know are out there. This continues through several different dreams, the source of the fear drawing closer and closer each night. When the source finally reveals itself, it is almost a relief to the shivering shells of the dream seeds that remain.

I have reproduced my interview with Shevern, whose dreams are clearly the work of Mullonga. Once this elf woman was an accomplished and cheerful rogue. All that changed after the event described below. Now Shevern is my patient, residing here at the clinic while I seek a way to break Mullonga's leathery grip. The dreams play out night after night as Shevern described them. I hope I can find a way to help her before her worst fears become reality in her dreams.

The Fearful

I'm a burglar. It's my trade, and I'm as proud of my profession as I am of my elven heritage. My dreams—nightmares, really—began after I tried to break into the house of a rich citizen in Kantora. I climbed to the roof with ease, but discovered that the place had protectors—a trio of powerful and gruesome gargoyles. The monsters chased me across the roofs of the town until I finally made a misstep and fell to the cobblestone streets below. I was injured, but not too badly. However, from that moment on, I lost the ability to function as a thief. Heights terrify me now, and buildings adorned with even a single, ornamental gargoyle make me break out in a cold, paralyzing sweat.

My dreams started that very same night, while I was lying unconscious on the street. In my dreams, I'm in a world of nothing but impossibly high rooftops and dark, endless night. I can't even find a way to climb down. After a few moments, I discover that I'm not alone. The midnight sky is filled with hordes of winged gargoyles. I shiver in the shadows, praying that they won't find me. Initally, they don't. Night after night, the dream returns. The heights, the night, the searching gargoyles—and me cowering in the shadows, paralyzed with fear.

Then, during one dream, I see an open window only a few buildings away. Inside the warmly lit room is a hoard of treasure, enough loot so that I can retire and never have to rob anyone again. I summon up all my courage and creep from the shadows, but just then a tremendous, horned gargoyle flies past. I retreat, able to do nothing but stare at the window from my hiding place.

The dream plays out in this manner for several more nights. I do nothing because I know—I know—that the gargoyles are moving closer and closer.

After several weeks of these nerve-wracking dreams, I can't take it anymore. The next time the dream occurs, I'll bolt from the shadows and run for the open window! It's a short run, and I know I can make it if I'm fast enough. The trouble is, I don't know if I'm fast enough. If I'm too slow, the gargoyles will catch me before I can reach that window. And if that happens, they'll tear me apart.

The Rainbow Serpent

The Rainbow Serpent is one of the most enigmatic members of the Nightmare Court. It appears as a winged serpent with vibrantly

colored stripes decorating its scaly skin. The creature is almost as mysterious and difficult to track as the Nightmare Man himself. I know not why this creature takes the anomalous form of a reptile while the rest of the members of the Court are, superficially at least, human. Perhaps it is foolish to even speculate on the form a creature of nightmare takes, as form is as fluid and malleable as anything else in the dream plane.

Like the wicked serpents of ancient lore, the Rainbow Serpent is a seditious liar. He chooses as prey those who have been betrayed, or those who fear that someone is about to betray them. Trips into the Serpent's dreamscapes often begin with situations designed to make the dreamer feel safe and secure. Lovers kiss under pale moonlight, the people of a village cheer and throw roses at a passing hero, or hearty companions raise their mugs to each other's health and fortune. From there, the Serpent plants seeds of mistrust, and one companion may even draw steel on another as the dream unfolds—sometimes carrying this outcome even into the waking world.

Such is the routine of the Rainbow Serpent.

Victims of the Rainbow Serpent?

I was asked to examine a strange case that happened right here in Egertus. Two adventuring companions who were based in town acted in such a manner that I am sure the Rainbow Serpent was involved. Unfortunately, I was called in too late to help save the pair.

The adventurers were Gris, a lady proficient with both swords and daggers, and Krystal, a female ranger who could put an arrow into the eye of a flying bird. Gris and Krystal performed many heroic deeds for Egertus over a three-year period. Bards sang their praises in taverns across Nova Vaasa, and everyone had only good things to say about the pair of fast friends.

A young man named Eric fell in love with Krystal, and the two began to spend more and more time together. Gris felt betrayed and alone, and said things over a mug of ale that she later regretted. Krystal misunderstood her old friend, assuming that Gris was attracted to Eric.

In Krystal's dreams, Gris and Eric became secret lovers. They laughed at the ranger behind her back, but Krystal saw all in her dreams. It was not long before the dreams turned to nightmares. In the nightmare, Eric and Gris did what Krystal feared most. They ran off together.

Krystal awoke from the terrible dream one night to discover that Eric was not beside her. She searched all over Egertus for either Eric or Gris, but could find neither of them. Eventually, just before dawn's light brightened the sky, she staggered back to her bed to sleep.

I believe that this whole incident was nothing more than a continuation of the nightmare. Krystal did not actually awake and search the town as she believed she did, for no one saw her and Gris was right where she would have been if the ranger had looked—asleep in her own bed, alone.

Because of the dream within a dream, Krystal was not aware that Gris and Eric had only united in her nightmare. The line between sleep and wakefulness had blurred, and Krystal awoke with a broken heart and murder in her thoughts. She gathered her bow and arrows, and with tears in her eyes tracked down her new lover and her old friend. She found them alone in their own homes and calmly put an arrow in each.

The nightmares did not end with the murders, however, and I was asked to treat poor Krystal in the dungeons beneath Egertus. I have been able to keep the town from killing her as punishment for the crimes, but I have not been able to free the ranger from the Rainbow Serpent's betraying coils.

Powers of the Nightmare Court

The members of the Nightmare Court are all but omnipotent in the dreamscapes they control. I write this with some clarification, as there is one aspect of a dream which they cannot control—the dreamers they lure to the dreamscapes.

A member of the Court can make the sun shine green. He can turn a tiny mouse into a slavering behemoth. The very earth and sky are putty to be molded in an instant into whatever shape or form the fiend desires. Sentient beings are created on a whim, each one falsely believing that it is a living, breathing creature. But for all their incredible powers, the members of the Court cannot control the actions of their visitors. They may be able to influence a dreamer through the environment, and trickery is always a part of their games, but they cannot directly control a dreamer's mind.

In a sense, a dreamer has as much creative power in a dreamscape as the Court. The dreamer may not be able to control a scene as easily as the villains can, but neither is the dreamer one of the constructs that populate dreamscapes. If a dreamer chooses not to open a door, no one can force him. The Court may fill a dreamer with apprehension, and they may even create a monstrous beast to push him along, but every ounce of their combined strength cannot make the dreamer perform any act he chooses not to.

Finally, there seems to be other limits on the Nightmare Court's power. Otherwise, why do they not simply bombard dreamers with monstrous creatures until they are overwhelmed? Obviously, this would not create the kind of rich fear and trepidation that these fiends thrive on, but are there other reasons as well? On several occasions I have sent volunteers into another's dream in an attempt to gather information or stage some sort of rescue. Why were they not slain outright? Does

the very use of the Court's incredible power consume some of its energies? If so, is there a point when it is no longer profitable for them to torment a dreamer who overcomes the horrors they throw at him? And are they so sure of their success that they can allow others into a dreamscape, knowing that the newcomers will only fail and provide even more energy for their insatiable appetites?

I personally believe that the Court must expend energy to manipulate a dreamscape. If the prey is providing less energy than the members are putting into it, eventually the dreamer will be set free. Such an event is rare, for there are few who can weather the frightening storms created by the nefarious Nightmare Court. Still, if a dreamer persists, if he plays their wicked games with all his wits, it *is* possible to win.

Striking at the Waking World

I have already mentioned Hypnos's power to plant hypnotic suggestions in the minds of dreamers. This is the only way the Court can tap into the will of a person in the waking world—at least as far as my research has shown. But the Nightmare Court does have many other ways of striking at those beyond the everpresent mists and on the other side of the Veil of Sleep.

I have seen *things* running through the halls of the clinic that could only have come from the mad Nightmare Lands. Most of these have been slain, though more than a few have disappeared into the shadows of our labyrinthine building. For this reason, do not wander these halls alone. Those we have slain were slavering fiends with no true intelligence. I am afraid I can offer little information on their physiology, for their corpses turned to sickly black slime immediately upon death.

There is another presence here at the clinic that I suspect is an agent of the Nightmare Court. A terrible spirit haunts the halls and gradually preys on the staff. It takes the form of dear Mandalain, the nurse I described earlier in these pages. It seems suspicious to me that Mandalain's ghost has decided to seek revenge now, almost 10 years after her death.

When my friend Van Richten was a guest at the clinic, he did some investigation on my behalf. However, as he had come to me for help in matters relating to his own mental distress, I did not push him to solve the problem of Mandalain's ghost. Perhaps he can return later to help lay the matter to rest.

Spotting the Nightmare Court

The villains of the Nightmare Court are rarely spotted in the dreamscapes they manipulate. On those occasions when it has occurred, those I have interviewed had just experienced some terrible setback in their treatment. Some of my patients claim that their tormentors appeared to be breathing in a glowing, sickly green vapor that rose from their own forms like fog rising from the morning dew.

I theorize that this is the fear and distress produced by the nightmares, the very sustenance that these unholy creatures crave. Allow me to illustrate my theory with an analogy. Think of a tea kettle. When the contents of the kettle become hot enough, it turns to steam and screams from the spout. The dream essence of each of us is much like this. When suitably distressed, it too releases "steam," or in this case, some part of the life essence. Upon release of this "steam," the dreamer also screams.

It is at this moment that the diabolic villains must materialize to inhale the vital stuff. In this fleeting instant, one *might* see them if the circumstances are right and one's eyes just happen to be focused in the right place. Those who spot the fiends should try not to lose their wits. They are urged to rally

against whatever dismal circumstance caused their horror, contain it, and finally drive it back into the depths of night where it belongs. Fight the Nightmare Court with will and courage. Deprive them of sustenance, and perhaps the truly evil nightmares will also fade away.

Besting the Nightmare Court

Though a dreamer's mind may wither under the horrible assaults of the Nightmare Court, it is possible to survive such nocturnal attacks. What weapon works in this dark and terrible place where dreams and consciousness meet? How can a dreamer win a game in which the rules change constantly?

There is only one answer: *perseverance.* I cannot stress this strongly enough. When everything in a dreamscape falls to pieces and the scene changes, learn the new rules as quickly as possible. If a lurker removes one tool, then search for another. Do not give in to despair, but fight on. When lost in some incredible labyrinth, keep searching for the exit no matter how many horrors, obstacles, or dead ends are encountered. If the Nightmare Court throws a dozen screaming, squealing horrors into a dream, never give up. Fight! Rage against the terrors until the rage evaporates, then rage *again!* There is no such thing as fatigue in the Nightmare Lands. Muscles will not fail the dreamer. The mind and the will to survive may buckle in this place of shadows, but do not let them. Fight until there is nothing left of the dream form, and even then look for ways to win whatever insidious game the villains are playing. Solve their mazes, crawl through their dungeons, and stand up to the horrible things that stalk the dreamscapes!

Persevere, and never surrender. The walls of my clinic echo with the wails of those who have. We need no more.

Other Denizens of Nightmare

I have spent many pages describing what I have learned about the rulers of nightmare, the dread Nightmare Court. What else roams the dreamscapes and the Terrain Between? While I cannot pretend to have seen even a fraction of the weird things that inhabit the Nightmare Lands, I can at least catalog those that are the most common.

Abber Nomads

A race of humans live in the Terrain Between. These beings, called Abber Nomads, are a stoic and proud people who have adapted to life in the Nightmare Lands. While they are as human as I am, the madness of the land around them has affected the culture that the Abbers have developed. An Abber's philosophy is that anything he cannot perceive for himself does not exist—including other Abbers! Wanderers in the Nightmare Lands may find help from the Abber Nomads. More likely than not, though, the Abbers will ignore wanderers, believing them to be more illusions spun into temporary existence by the Nightmare Lands.

Dream Spawn

Dream spawn come in two major types, *greater* and *lesser* dream spawn. They are creatures made up of one part wakefulness and two parts slumber, able to move from the Terrain Between to the dreamscapes at will. I believe that some of these creatures have even found paths into the solid reality of Nova Vaasa from time to time. Unlike most other denizens of the Nightmare Lands, the creatures I call dream spawn do sleep. Indeed, on my one trip into that mad land I witnessed scores of these creatures sleeping their dreamless sleep in huddled, disgusting masses.

There are a variety of lesser dream spawn. I call these malleable creatures "morphs," and I have personally witnessed the behavior of two varieties, the shadow and the gray. Lesser dream spawn populate the dreamscapes, taking on all the roles not commanded by dreamers from the waking world. Both types appear as blank, featureless humanoids with flesh like water. Shadow morphs mutate into nightmarish creatures, while gray morphs take on the forms of normal people, common animals, or even mundane objects in a dream.

Greater dream spawn are more independent and capable of a wider range of actions. I have identified only one type of greater dream spawn to date, the creatures I call "ennui." In its natural form, an ennui appears as a larger morph with four arms and huge wings. It can also change its appearance to match the dreamscape it is participating in. I believe that ennui serve as assistants to the Nightmare Court, running dreamscapes until the climax of the dream draws near.

It also seems that transformed dream spawn gain not only the strengths of the forms they take on, but the weaknesses as well. Thus, a shadow morph werewolf can be hurt by weapons forged from silver.

Feyrs

Another common denizen of nightmares are the feyrs. They, too, are divided into two groups: *lesser* and *greater* feyrs. Lesser feyrs (pronounced "fears") appear as humped, hunchbacked creatures of inhuman appearance. The hide of a feyr is mottled and warped like the surface of a brain. It has two large tentacles which serve as legs, while many smaller tentacles grow from other portions of its body. Massive horizontal jaws line its underside, and it has as many as five eyes. Greater feyrs are created when a number of lesser feyrs come into close proximity and merge into a single creature.

Feyrs have the ability to enter the dreamscapes at will. Worse yet, they seem capable of prowling the waking world as well—especially in places where there are many people. Not every feyr works for the Nightmare Court, but I have chronicled many who do.

Lost Souls

When wanderers die in the Nightmare Lands, their mortal remains sometimes become undead creatures I call "lost souls." Lost souls created in the Terrain Between are more substantial than their dreamscape counterparts. They take the form of zombie-like creatures that have the ability to merge into a single, tormented entity. Lost souls created in the dreamscapes are insubstantial specters that merge to form a single, writhing mass of moaning spirits. Both types produce fear in living beings. When close to the warm spark of life, lost souls often slip into a killing frenzy as they seek to recapture the warmth they have lost.

Shadows

The land of mad illusions has more than its share of creatures known as shadows. While these monsters cannot enter the dreamscapes, they are prevalent in the Terrain Between.

Night Terrors

Finally, there are a few creatures that are truly unique. I call these "night terrors," and I believe that Mandalain may be such a creature. These terrors pose great danger. Their unique natures make them hard to classify, and therefore hard to defeat. What hurts one night terror may be ineffectual against another.

CHAPTER II: THE NIGHTMARE LANDS

In the Nightmare Lands, the lines between reality and dreams are distorted. Sometimes they even merge, giving the domain a touch of the surreal. I once walked across that mad, changing landscape—and my dreams have never been the same.

— Dr. Rudolph van Richten

We have covered much, but the night still presses in upon the windows of the clinic and I have so much more to write before the light of day returns. If truth be told, sometimes I too fear the corridors of sleep and the night terrors they hold. By putting pen to paper I am able to keep sleep at bay and avoid the nightmares for a few more hours. Where was I? Oh yes, I wanted to write about the Nightmare Lands itself, that island of terror where madness rules supreme.

On the Shores of Madness

Earlier I described the Nightmare Lands as consisting of two distinct parts: the dreamscapes and the Terrain Between waking and sleeping. Dreamers are normally drawn to the dreamscapes, while physical wanderers fare better in the Terrain Between. There are exceptions to these rules, of course, but in general this is the way the reality of the Nightmare Lands works.

The dreamscapes rest in the Nightmare Lands, but there is much more to the domain than these bubble-shaped pockets of dream stuff. The Nightmare Lands is an island lost somewhere in the cold reaches of the surrounding mist.

The laws of reality function differently here. First, the sun never shines on this forsaken island. Another aspect that stretches the place's connection to the waking world almost to the breaking point is the way in which the land sometimes undergoes a transformation. The rocky shoals, the wilderness beyond it, and the streets of the island's only town all *change*. A visitor never actually sees this metamorphosis occur, but once it has he'll realize that things are not as they were. How this is possible I cannot explain, but it is true.

The only way to reach the isle is through the mists. Logic dictates that if you head east past the border of Nova Vaasa, you'll eventually reach a body of water, and if you cross that water, you'll reach the shores of the mad land. However, logic rarely seems to apply to the mists that surround the known world.

The first time I traveled to the Nightmare Lands, the time I accompanied Van Richten, was many years ago. We simply walked from Nova Vaasa to the blasted outlands that mark the beginning of the region of madness. That route is no longer possible. The second time I traveled to the Nightmare Lands, just a few short months ago, I set out by ship along the Dnar River. It was a terrifying journey, especially when the river emptied into the thick, clinging mists. We had no real way to navigate, and no wind filled the sails inside the mist. There were only the water currents and the strange pull of the Nightmare Lands itself to move us. I do not know how the ship reached those mad shores, or even how it found its way back to the Dnar, but it did.

On that most recent trip, after many days of floating in the ethereal mists, the ship finally broke free into a stretch of open sea our captain called the Nocturnal. It was night, of course, and the sky above was clear. I could see stars and a pale moon, though the horizon was still cloaked in mist. As this is the approach most wanderers will take when journeying to the Nightmare Lands, I will set down what I learned of the place's geography. It was different from the first time I was there, but that seems to be the nature of the place. The next time—if there is one—I am sure the place will have changed again.

The Terrain Between

The physical dimensions of the Nightmare Lands are a mixture of the waking world and the substance of dreams. As such, nothing is as it truly appears, and what can be seen one moment will be gone the next. Still, there were some consistencies the two times I traveled the Nightmare Lands. Here, then, are the regions of the place that I have been able to define.

Rocky Shoals

The island lies in a clearing in the perpetual mists that surround the civilized places of our world. This veil of grayness lies so close to the island that ships do not spot its shores until they are almost upon it. To make matters worse, the isle is surrounded by shoals too terrible to be cast of normal stone. Besides the savagery of the waves that crash upon them, the jagged rocks actually shift occasionally, making it nearly impossible for a vessel to approach without being dashed to pieces.

On our trip, the captain of the ship suggested anchoring beyond the shoals and swimming in. The water proved too frigid for such a course, and we discovered first hand that the Nocturnal Sea had its own collection of horrors. I suspect that small boats would suffer the same fate as the three crewmen who tested the water for us that day—they were torn apart by sharks, giant octopi, or something even worse.

The skeletons of great ships still roll about the changing rocks. After only a few weeks of such abuse, most of these vessels consist of little more than hulls surrounded by piles of broken timber. Unfortunately, it seems the wrecks provide just enough shelter to harbor the crews that once sailed within them. I say "unfortunately" for these are no hardy sailors fighting for survival. No, these men did not survive the chilly seas, but they remain with

their vessels. Scores of sea-borne undead cling to the shoals and wreckage, awaiting the precious taste of living flesh.

Avoid these unfortunates if you can, destroy them when you must. We did.

The Outlands

Beyond the shoals, the waves crash upon a rise of gray earth and exposed stone. The land here was stark and bare, made up of broken ground, rocky canyons, and tall, jagged cliffs. It never rained while we were there, but the sky was filled with lightning and thunder echoed through these badlands. Occasionally fingers of lightning would reach down to caress the ground. Like wicked nails or the claws of some terrible beast, these bolts cut more furrows in the land. It was a spectacular sight—and a terrifying one.

No other features mark this dismal zone. I did not see any living creatures, but there were signs of their passing. Strange tracks in the lifeless dust indicated that, besides for the undead of the shoals, we were not alone.

The Ring of Dreams

I saw the Ring of Dreams the first time I visited the Nightmare Lands. Both Van Richten and myself assumed it was a band of lightning-filled storm clouds at first. As we drew nearer, however, we began to realize that the "clouds" harbored something far different from thunder and lightning.

Hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of glistening spheres of various sizes encircle the core of the island. The surfaces of the spheres are clear, but the interiors are dark and distant. What is inside these spheres? Each glistening globe contains a dreamscape. Within each pocket dimension, a tortured dreamer provides the seed of a particular dream scene.

I found myself gazing at these strange pocket dimensions as I traveled the island. The immense size of some of the spheres makes them visible from almost any point in the Nightmare Lands. Be careful, however. On my most recent trip to this region, some members of the ship's crew went mad from staring into these spheres. And one crewman was actually dragged into a dreamscape. We could not retrieve him.

The spheres range in size from small globes only a few feet across to giant globes some 300 feet in diameter. All of them float in place above the ground; the lowest about one foot above the surface, the highest reaching 500 feet into the sky. Each sphere contains something much like a stage. The stage is empty and bare, waiting for a dream to give it substance and dimension. What plays unfold upon these stages? The plot of each is inspired by the fertile imaginations of the dreamers trapped within them, for the sphere are most assuredly prisons and the Nightmare Court the wardens.

Dreamers trapped within dreamscapes become seeds whose imaginations—sparked by trauma, guilt, fear, or other negative emotions—give rise to particular dream scenes. A dream seed becomes the star of a macabre drama that is serialized over many, many nights. Every time sleep overtakes him, the dream seed returns to the dreamscape that binds him until the Nightmare Court tires of his drama, he overcomes their vile powers, or his mind shatters into a thousand fragments.

Though the size of the spheres can be measured from the outside, the dreamscape within is unlimited. The actual dimensions are determined by the dream seed's drama and the wishes of the play's director—some member of the Nightmare Court. There is another aspect of dreamscapes to consider: time. While it may appear that hours, days, or even years are passing during the course of a particular dream, time outside the sphere is moving along at a normal pace. The movement of time, either slowed to a crawl or accelerated to a dizzying pace, is another illusion of the Nightmare Lands.

The Forest of Everchange

Just beyond the Ring of Dreams lies the Forest of Everchange. I term it a forest for that is what we saw when first we entered this zone, but that is something of a misnomer. The forest should most likely be called the "Wilderness of Everchange." Within its boundaries I have seen vast plains, thundering volcanoes, and even tropical islands in the middle of a frozen lake. All of these features shift and change occasionally, though a visitor will rarely notice the transformation before it is complete. We made the mistake of using a large glowing volcano as a landmark. When we stopped to rest and eat a quick meal, the entire mountain had vanished! We later crossed where we thought the volcano should have been but found only a small village in a lush, green valley.

I believe that the member of the Nightmare Court known as Morpheus controls this region. Within the boundaries of the forest rests a large lake that the Abber Nomads who roam the area call Languor. A river empties from this lake, eventually carrying its glistening waters to the Nocturnal Sea. When a change occurs, the scenery shifts into some new form. Mountains burst from the ground, gaping chasms open wide, forest turns to tropical jungle, or wilderness transforms into settled town. During my two trips through this region, I noticed that the default form was that of a deciduous forest. Perhaps that signifies the region's true form. Perhaps not.

The City of Nod

I have heard it referred to as the Nightmare City, or the Land of Forgotten Dreams, or the City of Nod. I call it madness. It lies at the center of the island, protected by the shifting landscape of the Forest of Everchange. Whatever else may occupy this mad metropolis, I believe that it serves as home to the Nightmare Court.

Nod is a vast, ruined metropolis filled with discarded hopes, fears, guilts, and terrors left over from a thousand tortured dreamers. It is the macabre center of a twisting webwork that reaches out to all the minds in the world. Like the dead husks that litter a spider's web, the memories of those who have passed through lie in the untracked streets and alleyways.

Do not attempt to map this place, for the ruined buildings and their crumbling facades change as often as a madman's thoughts. All of the denizens I wrote of earlier can be encountered in Nod. Walk carefully here, for even dreams can be lethal to those who travel this region in physical form.

Lairs of the Nightmare Court

The City of Nod and the surrounding Forest of Everchange are as real as the journal you hold in your hands. I can tell you that the villains of the Nightmare Court are similarly real, for I have seen at least one of them with my own eyes. Here is what I was able to learn about the places within the forest and Nod where the members of the Nightmare Court reside.

The Grieving Cathedral

The Nightmare Man resides in an oppressive cathedral at one extreme of the circular City of Nod. There are no true magnetic directions in this domain, but I and my companions always designated this unholy place as "north" for our own convenience. The cathedral is the tallest and most visible structure in the ruined city, so it makes a good landmark for travelers.

Dark stains drip from two shattered windows that look inexplicably like eyes over the place's arched doorway. From a distance, the facade looks much like a mournful face, which caused Van Richten to name the place the Grieving Cathedral. If the building truly cries, it is no doubt due to the misery and pain its lonely resident has caused.

The cathedral sits in a foreboding cemetery, and a rusting, wrought-iron fence encircles the entire place. A number of fountains near the main entrance gurgle a thick, red fluid that looks suspiciously like blood. Malicious gargoyles sit atop the buttresses of the cathedral, though I have no idea if they are capable of animation.

Most frightening, however, are the stained glass windows that cover most of the outside walls. Even from the outside, where no moon light illuminates their surfaces, one can tell that the images within the glass shift and change. It is almost as if the glass was some sort of crystal ball. In essence, I believe the windows serve as such a device; the objects of their scrying is the myriad dreamscapes of the Ring of Dreams.

Though one of my patients once described the interior of this cathedral for me from her dreams, I was reluctant to confirm her vision when I visited Nod. I stood outside for a long time, but never found the courage to actually step inside.

The Theater Macabre

The Ghost Dancer haunts a grand building called the Theater Macabre. Atop the foreboding brown structure are three stone muses cast in eternal agony—one laughs, one cries, one scowls in anger, but all seem tormented and in pain. Inside the theater, a grand lobby gives way to the auditorium itself, where rows of seats spread out before a great stage. The seats are filled with the dusty remains of the Ghost Dancer's unwitting patrons, dead men and women who must watch the macabre performances for all eternity.

Members of my second expedition entered the theater and heard eerie music. Most fled immediately. Those who stayed emerged with their sanity shattered, but I was able to discern that they witnessed the Ghost Dancer herself perform a tragic ballet. They also noted that the audience of the dead became animated when the music began to play.

The Spire of Sleep

A lonely tower of pale white stone rises above one corner of the City of Nod. I saw no doors or windows in this tower, no obvious entrances of any sort. The tower sits on an island surrounded by a moat whose waters will put most anyone who breathes their mists to sleep. The first time I was here the place was a disturbing enigma. The second time, a wizard who accompanied me provided some clues as to the resident of this structure. I now believe that Hypnos himself is sealed within this tower of mausoleum stone.

The wizard used her magic to peer inside the tower. She saw a coffin made of glass. Inside the coffin was a figure who she described as the member of the Court who I call Hypnos. The villain seemed to be in a state of slumber, though his right eye opened wide and looked upon the wizard as she magically studied him.

Within the Forest of Everchange

Morpheus, the master of change, makes his home in the Forest of Everchange. No permanent structure has ever been found there, so it is likely Morpheus's lair is as fleeting as his realm. Perhaps Morpheus has no home at all, and simply wanders through his chaotic forest causing change wherever he goes.

Fortunately, there is one group of mortal inhabitants in the Nightmare Lands—the Abber Nomads. I must recount a chant I heard them sing one night.

The Changer without feet walks the land,
Where he goes, the forest dies,
New lands spring from his footless footsteps,
And the cycle of change begins anew.

Could the chant be speaking of Morpheus? If so, perhaps it is his presence that instigates a change in the wilderness we call the Everchange. The Abbers see the shifting

landscape as a natural part of their world, but I sense an unnatural hand at work.

The Ghettoes

A section of Nod is even older and more decrepit than the rest. The place I call the Ghettoes consists of ramshackle tenements with narrow streets and twisting alleys between them. It is a dark, confusing area. This is the lair of the witch known as Mullonga, an entire ghetto of fear and loathing. Beyond this, the Ghettoes have a rather distinct aspect. The place rarely rests in one location for long. Instead, the entire district roams about Nod like a hungry predator. Those within it are taken along for the ride, and I can tell you it is a frightening experience.

During my second expedition to the Nightmare Lands, we wandered into the Ghettoes and became lost within its confines. Things stalked us from the moment we became lost, sticking to the shadows but still letting us know they were there. As we searched for a way back into the city proper, the streets and alleys rearranged themselves to block our way or lead us deeper into the Ghettoes. It was like a constantly changing maze. It took many hours and frequent battles to find our way out of Mullonga's shifting lair.

The Park Primeval

The least human member of the Nightmare Court presides over a different kind of maze. Instead of a maze of crumbling buildings and confusing streets, the Rainbow Serpent controls an overgrown jungle. This jungle is enclosed within an iron fence, and above the three gates are signs that read, "The Park Primeval." I cannot tell you who named it thus, but it is certainly an apt description. Inside the iron fence is a jungle so overgrown, so wild, so ... *primitive*, that one imagines it is a piece of the original world—the place where evil was born.

We did not enter the park after our encounter with Mullonga, but we were able to gain the roof of a tall building nearby and spy on it from there. The interior was a living labyrinth, and our look-out could see things moving about within. The most outstanding feature was a giant tree with long, sprawling limbs and black leaves. It grew near the center of the enclosure. A spy-glass revealed that its great roots pulsed, as if they were drawing some thick fluid from the ground. No doubt the Rainbow Serpent slithered about the boughs of that tree, grinning at us from the concealment of the black canopy, though we never saw him.

He Who Walks Alone

Near the end of my first trip to the Nightmare Lands, Van Richten and I chanced upon an old man looking out over the changing landscape. We hurried away from him at once, believing him to be a transformed dreamspawn. But he called to us, asking if we were from the world beyond. I kept my distance, but cautiously answered yes. The man's eyes beamed and he smiled earnestly. "Sit," he invited. "I have many questions to ask about your strange world."

I answered his innocuous questions politely, and then asked a few of my own. He increased my knowledge of the Nightmare Lands a hundred fold, and I have shared it with you.

Who was this being? He was a shaman of the Abber Nomads called Walks Alone, and he told me of the nether portals. These hidden doorways lead out of the dream spheres, transporting wanderers to the Terrain Between or even to the waking world. Only through sheer force of will and with the power of a magical talisman called a "dreamcatcher" can a wanderer successfully navigate a nether portal. In many cases, that is their only way home.

y friend. The first rays of dawn have set the horizon outside my window aglow, and I have reached the last page of this journal. I know of your reputation as an adventurer, so I will end this book with a request. Join me at my Clinic for the Mentally Distressed, in the province of Nova Vaasa, in the town of Egertus, on the banks of the Dnar River. I need your help. Van Richten has left these halls and I am alone against the Nightmare Court. Do not leave me to face the Court alone for too much longer.

I cannot promise you will live through the experience, or that you will even emerge from our battles with your sanity intact. I will, however, swear that I will do all within my power to protect you from the ills of the Court. By letting you read this journal, I have already taken you into my confidence. Will you do the same for me? Will you trust me as your guide into the Nightmare Lands?

If you agree with my assumptions, then hurry to Egertus. Join me, and together we will explore this sinister, nocturnal world. But if you join my quest, do so with conviction, because once you send your mind into the dreamscapes, or your body into the Nightmare Lands, escape becomes a difficult thing.

The strongest of you will sleep, and together we will send your dream-selves into the dreamscapes. There you can attempt to alleviate the suffering of my patients and save their minds. No matter where your talents lie, the suffering dream seeds need your help. I know that the risks are great, but I can think of no greater calling than to aid your fellow man.

If you would rather travel to the Nightmare Lands in the flesh, I will help you organize an expedition. I can point you toward the mists and direct you toward someone who can provide you with a dreamcatcher. While others attempt to rescue my patients and others suffering in the dreamscapes, you will gather information for our long-range goal—the utter destruction of the Nightmare Court. We must know more than I have gathered about their lairs and their defenses. We must gather intelligence on the villains' powers outside the dreamscapes. And perhaps most importantly, we will one day have to stage an attack on these fiends to see if their flesh does indeed part before cold steel.

Either way you choose to wage war on the nefarious Court will prove a harrowing experience, whether in dream or in the flesh. I will see to your mundane needs—a room to stay in and wholesome food to eat—but only you can properly armor your heart and mind against the terrors of the night.

Mandalain

I have one last request for those of you who have read this journal. Even if you are not willing to commit to battling the Nightmare Court, I would ask you to help rid these halls of the ghost of Mandalain. I have told you her origin, and that I believe this is no true spirit but some incredibly powerful pawn of the Nightmare Man. If you can destroy this thing for us, I will offer you whatever prize it is within my power to provide. I am sure the people of Egertus would be willing to compensate you as well. I have inserted a map of the clinic near the front of this journal that might help you hunt out this specter. My office is on the upper floor of the clinic, and you are welcome to use any of the vacant apartments across from it.

Will you help? If not, I will understand. It takes much courage to face down dreams and nightmares, and not everyone is equipped for such work. Someday, however, you or someone close to you may fall victim to the Court. When that day comes, contact me. I will help you—if I am still able.

Dr. Gregorian Illhousen

"I thought the nightmares were a symptom of their madness. It turns out they were the *cause*...."

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Campaign Expansion
Book Two:
The Rules of
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by Shane Lacy Hensley
and Bill Slavicsek

BOOK TWO:
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INTRODUCTION

Thorin sets his sword aside and collapses atop his bed. The ichorous blood of the harpy flock he battled a short while ago stains his sword and the armor he still wears. He's too tired to care, too sore to bother cleaning them now. Cleaning can wait until morning. Right now it is time to sleep.

Sleep doesn't come easily to Thorin this night, however. He remembers the events of the day, beginning with his return home to discover that his brother's family and several other people from the village had been abducted by harpies who had recently made nests in the nearby hills. He remembers the horror he felt when one of the villagers told him the news. And he remembers the anger, welling up inside him, threatening to overflow like a river after the spring rains.

He begins to doze, but sleep doesn't completely claim him. His mind races through the unfolding memories, moving faster and faster toward the ending—an ending he'd rather not think about before he falls asleep. Unfortunately, he can't stop the images. He can only be carried along on the tide of emotions and watch it happen all over again.

Rounding up a half-dozen men and women. Marching boldly toward the hills. Losing two companions to the first ambush. Losing a third to the second attack. Reaching the hills. Hacking and slashing, climbing ever higher, fighting for every foot of advancement toward the summit nests. Blood and feathers. So much blood and feathers. Reaching the nests. The stench! How horrible it smells. The bodies. The nests are littered with bones and rotting bodies, some with faces he recognizes.

"I couldn't save them," Thorin whispers as his eyelids droop. "I was too late." His chin falls to his chest as the weariness finally overcomes him. Sleep will feel so good …

Thorin's eyes snap wide. Was that just the wind blowing through the open window, or was it laughter? A cackle? A shriek? Closer, just outside, sounds like those made by the largest of the harpies, a foul, disgusting creature that died on the blade of his sword and even now was cooling atop the remains of the people Thorin couldn't save. At least, that's where it should be.

Grabbing his sword, Thorin rushes out into the night. The cackle-laughter is all around him, hanging in the air as though bonded to the evening mist. He knows that sound! "Where are you?" he shouts, but the only response is a terrifying shriek that seems to burst from every direction at once.

Doesn't anyone else hear that sound? Thorin wonders. He calls for help, but no one answers. No candles flicker on in dark windows. No doors swing open to reveal helpful villagers. There is only Thorin, the night, and the continuous harpy laugh.

His sword before him, Thorin enters the nearest house. "Arise!" he commands, tapping the sleeper hidden beneath a blanket with his boot. "What's wrong with you, Orgels?" Thorin shouts, pulling the blanket aside—revealing Orgels' partially consumed body, like a rotting deer after the carrion-eaters had gotten it.

Thorin races from house to house, discovering the same grisly scene in each bedroom. The villagers are all dead, their bodies feasted upon just like the people in the harpy nests. The people he couldn't save.

He can almost pinpoint the cackle now, the sound so loud that the huge harpy must almost be upon him. He turns one way, then the other, hoping to catch sight of the beast before it flies at him with talons extended. His sword blade

flashes in the moonlight and what he sees chills his blood. The ichor on his blade shakes with each cackle, as though the gore was the source of the noise.

"What's happening here?" Thorin screams as the ichor begins to move. It slithers down the blade, sliding over the crossguard to coat his hands. Where it touches his flesh, it eats away the skin and exposes gnawed bone. He screams again as it slides up his arms, but his voice is lost in the insistent cackle of harpy song. He feels the ichor burn its way over his body and he knows that he has failed again.

With that thought echoing in his mind, Thorin sits up in bed. He was only dreaming, and already the terror is dissipating. The guilt, however, remains, along with the feelings of failure and inadequacy. He holds his hands up to assure himself that they are still whole and healthy. What he sees brings another scream to his throat—he can see bone through the holes in his flesh!

Thorin sits up in bed as he fully emerges from the nightmare,his hands unblemished, sweat clinging to his body like a second skin.

Welcome to the Nightmare

This is the flavor of the Nightmare Lands. A character happens into a circumstance so evil or a dilemma so terrible that his mind reels with the task of sorting through the trauma. When fitful sleep finally comes, the malicious Nightmare Court peers into the troubled mind and smiles at the delicious fear, guilt, shame, paranoia, or shock that brews within. One member of the Court then pulls the victim from the dream plane and drags him unknowingly into the Nightmare Lands. There the nightmare becomes all the more real. Nightmare episodes occur in a pocket dimension opened by the Nightmare Court and constructed using the victim's worst fears. Within this horrible place, the dreamer is put through a series of trials that peel the layers of his psyche away like a child peels the rind from a piece of fruit. The Nightmare Court feeds upon the sweet nectar of fear squeezed from the exposed mind.

As long as the victim continues to struggle, the Court drags him back into their strange domain night after night. Eventually madness sets in and the dreamer falls into a deep coma, becoming a permanent prisoner in the nightmare. Only when the mind stops resisting, when the fruit is a dried husk with no value, does the Court cease its torment. In the waking world, the victim's heart continues to beat, but the mind is left a useless thing that no spell or miracle can ever cure.

The end is not always so bleak. A few dreamers, a *very* few, have managed to battle their way back from this place of torment. Night after night they battled the tricks, tortures, and creatures of the Nightmare Court. Many times they were set back, and some even went mad for a time. But those who survived were able to overcome whatever horrors plagued them.

Now this imaginary world of surreal terror is opened for your characters, a world full of exciting, chilling tales waiting to be told. Welcome to the nightmare.

How To Use This Product

This product contains four books and two poster maps. Only *Book One: The Journal of Dr. Illhousen* should be read by players. It contains material that helps set the stage for the accompanying adventures. The other books are strictly for Dungeon Masters: this rules book, the adventure book, and the *Monstrous Supplement.* Read the journal to get the flavor of this campaign expansion, then dive into this book for detailed explanations. Though this is a RAVENLOFT® product, it provides details for using the material to run dream adventures in any campaign.

CHAPTER 1: DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES

"Dreams are as real as any reality you will ever know. They are just different, like the world seen within a mirror or reflected on the surface of a still lake."

—Abukar the Insane

An examination of the way dreams and nightmares work in any AD&D® campaign world is necessary before focusing on how they work in the Nightmare Lands. The information that follows is not common knowledge to the inhabitants of the various campaign worlds. Indeed, the vast majority of people believe that dreams are nothing more than series of images, ideas, and emotions occurring during sleep. Some know bits of the true knowledge as legends or myths. A select few know the truth, though most of these people are wizards, priests, sages, or the rare planewalker (for few planewalkers know the reality of dreams).

Common Dreams

Most human, demihuman, and humanoid beings require sleep. During sleep, all beings dream, even if they can't recall any details. Sometimes dreams take frightening turns, but in general even the worst, most terrifying nightmares are part of the normal dreaming process.

Dreams help people work out the problems of the day, giving control to the subconscious for a time while the conscious mind rests. Dreams usually have a cathartic effect, helping to purge negative emotions or offering possible solutions or courses of action to the conscious mind. Normal nightmares work the same way as the subconscious reveals things that the conscious mind is afraid of in an effort to overcome those fears.

The Dream Plane

Where do dreams take place? To answer that question, we first need to understand the nature of the multiverse. It might prove helpful to refer to Chapter 15 of *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* while reading this section.

All AD&D campaign worlds exist on the Prime Material Plane. Each separate world exists inside a separate crystal sphere. Thus, one crystal sphere contains Toril, the world of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign, while another contains Athas, the world of the DARK SUN® setting. Each of these worlds and others float somewhere in the Prime Material Plane.

Surrounding the Prime Material Plane are the mists of the Ethereal Plane. The Ethereal Plane consists of three distinct parts: the Border Ethereal, the Wall of Color, and the Deep Ethereal.

The Border Ethereal touches the Prime, but it is really a place of both dimensions. When someone is in the Border Ethereal, he's here and there at the same time. This is where ethereal travelers walk, for example, among the shadowy outlines of adjacent planes and the mists of green, blue, and silver.

The Deep Ethereal is like a vast ocean, with islands of matter called demiplanes floating in its endless mists. The Demiplane of Dread, the setting for all RAVENLOFT® campaigns, is located here. This demiplane of fear and madness includes the Nightmare Lands domain.

Between the Border and the Deep, a shimmering wall of color stretches to separate one part from the other. It's a two-dimensional boundary, having width and length but no discernible depth. Those who have seen the northern lights of many prime worlds mentally

connect the phenomenon to the Wall of Color, for they appear similar. Those who understand the true nature of its existence, however, know this shimmering expanse by its real name: *the dream plane*.

The dream plane exists in the extradimensional, infinitesimal width of the Wall of Color. It is not a solid, travel-inhibiting barrier, but a translucent expanse of bright patterns of harmless energy. On one level of reality, it is simply a rainbow in the ethereal mist. On another, it holds the place where dreams occur.

Due to its connection to all prime worlds via the mists of the Border Ethereal, the dream plane is sort of a reflection of all reality. When a person dreams, a portion of his inner being interacts with this reflection. This *dream-self* maintains a connection with the physical body but also passes into the dream plane in order to participate in normal dream scenes.

The exterior of the Wall of Color, the true boundary between the waking world and the dream plane, is known as the *Veil of Sleep*. In common dreams, only a dream-self can cross the Veil of Sleep and enter the extradimensional space of the dream plane. (Planar travelers simply pass through the Wall of Color and enter the Deep Ethereal. They can't get to the extradimensional space that exists between one side of the wall and the other.) Inside the dream plane, dreamers participate in separate and extremely personal dream scenes of their own (albeit subconscious) creation. Sometimes dream images can spill from one dreamer's scene into another's, or two or more dreamers can actually share the same dream scene, but these are extremely rare occurrences.

Ethereal travelers wandering near the Wall of Color can't see the multitude of dreams playing out within its shimmering surface. For one thing, those who are awake can't cross or see through the Veil of Sleep. For another, the dream scenes occur in a place that's slightly askew from normal reality. Particularly sensitive travelers might hear distant voices or catch some unexplainable movement out of the corner of their eyes, but that's about the only clues they'll encounter as to the true nature of the dream plane.

The Reality of Dreams

Both the waking world and dreams have reality, though the level of that reality varies. For comparison, each level of reality is given a rating. This rating ranges from 1 (the most ephemeral) to 4 (the most real).

The vast majority of dreams taking place in the dream plane have a reality level of 1. This means that the dream scene is real in and of itself, but it has no lasting effect on the waking world. Events in this level of reality are fleeting and insubstantial. They can affect the thoughts and emotions of the dreamer, but little else.

Rare individuals have the ability to inadvertently alter their dreams to level 2 reality. These dreams become more real, more tangible, and pocket dimensions called *dreamscapes* are formed to contain them. Within a dreamscape, dream scenes can have more lasting effects, even going so far as to change the physical reality of the waking world. Dreamers can be damaged or even killed by dream scenes with this level of reality.

The waking world is defined as level 3 reality. Nature operates by the normal laws of the world, whatever they may be. All prime worlds have this level of reality.

Level 4 reality is *hyper-reality*, where all things are more real than reality itself. Some portions of some planes may contain this level of reality. Events here are more pronounced, more potent. A blow inflicts more damage in this reality, a spell has more power, food tastes much better, and colors are more vibrant.

Legends claim that there is a fifth level of reality, places where the powers of the planes reside. If such a level of reality exists, it is beyond the reach of most mortal beings.

Dreamscapes

The second level of reality occurs in pocket dimensions called dreamscapes. These appear as glistening spheres of various sizes. A sphere which contains a dream is filled with bright, swirling colors, while a nightmare dreamscape has a dark interior. In the dream plane, these spheres occasionally form as bubbles in the Wall of Color that extend beyond the usual flat expanse. These bubbles exist only until the dreams inside them come to an end, at which time they gently burst into the colors they were formed from. Because the Wall of Color extends infinitely along the vertical plane, and because dreamscapes in the dream plane are exceedingly rare and short-lived, most ethereal travelers will never see one. If an ethereal traveler is lucky enough to spot a dreamscape, he or she will see it as simply a bulge in the otherwise flat expanse. (Note that in the Nightmare Lands, permanent spheres have been established by the Nightmare Court.)

Rare individuals can sometimes dream these spheres into existence, though such an event often requires a catalyst. Great trauma, extreme grief or happiness, magical effects, psionic ability, or the attention of a planar power are the usual catalysts that trigger the creation of dreamscapes.

Sometimes powers (beings who some call gods) need to pass information to their followers or other mortals in a way that is more subtle than speaking from a lightning-filled cloud or sending a glowing avatar into the midst of a crowded city. In this type of situation, a power can create a dreamscape and call a particular dreamer into it. This is the source of some omens and prophetic visions.

Individual dreamers provide the energy that keeps dreamscapes coherent. Once a dream

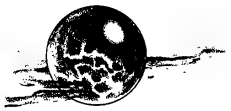
ends and the dream-self returns to the waking world, the dreamscape he occupied dissipates back into the mists. Bear in mind that all of this usually occurs without any conscious knowledge or action on the part of the dreamer. Some wizards, priests, or psionicists may have the ability to consciously will these spheres into existence when in a trance state, but this is not the norm. Dreams and dreamscapes simply play out night after night, happening on an instinctual level that few are aware of and even fewer can control.

While each sphere has a certain size when viewed from the outside, the inside of a dreamscape is as large or as small as it needs to be to contain the dream scene. Time also flows differently within a dreamscape. Hours, months, or years may pass over the course of a dream, but the dreamer only dreams for seconds or minutes.

In Chapter II: Dream Rules, specific game mechanics are presented for handling travel, combat, and damage in dreamscapes and the other levels of reality.

Controlled Dreams

Somewhere inside the Demiplane of Dread, in a domain called the Nightmare Lands, at least three levels of reality are at work at the same time. The fleeting dream streams of level 1 reality drift amid great clouds of level 2 reality, causing both to interact with the more permanent expanse of level 3 reality to create a place of madness and constant change. (Dr. Illhousen calls this combined reality "the Terrain Between,"



between the waking world and sleep, because it exhibits characteristics of both states of existence.) This combination of reality levels gives the domain a unique relationship and special connection to the dream plane—a situation that the villains of the Nightmare Court take full advantage of.

Led by a mysterious dark lord called the Nightmare Man, the Nightmare Court feeds on the fears and insecurities of dreamers. The members of the Court specialize in different types of dreams, but they share a common desire—the dreams they crave are all nightmares. Details concerning the Nightmare Court and the Nightmare Lands it controls appear in Chapter III: The Nightmare Lands. A brief overview is included here as a prelude to the next chapter, Dream Rules.

The members of the Nightmare Court have the ability to reach into the dream plane and drag dreamers into their realm of terror. They can't physically leave their domain to enter the dream plane. Instead, they control a mystical, invisible web that stretches from the Nightmare Lands through the Deep Ethereal and into the dream plane. Inside the dream plane, the mystical filaments act like the strands of a spider's web, waiting to snag unsuspecting dreamers instead of flies. Only dark dreams interest the Nightmare Court, so the web is designed to entangle and snare nightmares and the dreamers experiencing them. Other dreams are unaffected by the web.

A dreamer (actually, the dream-self) caught in the web is only held for a short period of time (never longer than six nights). During this period, the nightmare becomes a recurring dream. It plays out each night and sometimes multiple times in a single night. The fear and negative emotions it produces in the dreamer provides sustenance to the Nightmare Court that is passed along via the mystical web. The effects of this nocturnal feeding are described in Chapter II.

Through the extended senses provided by

the mystical web, the Nightmare Court's members can gaze into the dream plane and examine the dreams they have captured. When a particular dreamer interests a member of the Court, that dreamer's dream-self is pulled down the web line and into the Nightmare Lands. In the Nightmare Lands, the dreamer becomes a prisoner whose darkest subconscious is used to entertain and feed a particular Court member. Over time, unless he can withstand the tortures and find a way to break free, madness devours the dreamer's mind until no shred of sanity remains.

Dream prisoners of the Nightmare Court are held in the permanent dreamscapes that surround the interior region of the Nightmare Lands. These dreamscapes are similar to the ones that form in the dream plane except that they are always in existence. They don't fade away when a particular dream ends.

The inner regions of these pockets of dream reality are like empty stages waiting for plays and players to prance across them. Captured dreamers are locked inside the sphere, where their nightmares and darkest phobias provide the energy to create dream scenes. The members of the Nightmare Court act as directors, controlling the pace and level of terror so that they can draw the most nourishment and enjoyment from the hapless victims.

Though a dreamer's dream-self may be a prisoner of the Nightmare Court, his waking body shows signs of wear. Upon waking, a tormented dreamer appears haggard. In time, his physical and mental condition deteriorates as the benefits of restful sleep are denied. He becomes weak, listless, gaunt. Paranoia sets in, eventually leading to true madness. If such a person doesn't find release from the machinations of the Nightmare Court, insanity and failing health will eventually lead to death.

here are no rules in the Nightmare Lands."
—Dr. Gregorian Illhousen

Despite the fact that Dr. Gregorian Illhousen of Nova Vaasa is right about a great many things, his theory that the Nightmare Lands domain operates without any discernible rules isn't one of them. In fact, all dreams have rules. It's just that the rules don't follow any set pattern. Bluntly, dream reality is a reality of constant change—everything is subject to change in a dream, even the rules that govern the dream reality.

In this chapter, the rules governing normal dreams and nightmares are presented first, followed by rules and rule modifications specific to the Nightmare Lands. The base rules can be used in any AD&D campaign setting. The modified rules apply only to RAVENLOFT and the Nightmare Lands.

The Rules of Reality

As discussed in Chapter I, there are at least four levels of reality: dreams, dreamscapes, the waking world, and hyper-reality. All worlds on the Prime Material Plane exist at the third level of reality (the waking world). Characters can enter the first and second levels of reality while in the dream state, those periods during normal sleep when their dream-selves involuntarily travel to the dream plane. Some few characters can even actively induce the dream state through the use of spells or trances.

A dream-self is a mental replica of a character that has no reality in the waking world but takes on substance in dreams and dreamscapes (reality levels 1 and 2).

Creating Dream-Selves

Every character with the capacity to sleep and dream has a counterpart *dream-self* that participates in events that occur in level 1 and level 2 realities. If a player character is going to adventure in either dream reality, the player should prepare a separate character record sheet for the character's dream persona.

Ability Scores

A character's dream-self has the same Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores as his waking self. The dream-self's Strength and Dexterity scores are based on the character's mental abilities, though his perceptions of his physical abilities may modify the scores.

Strength Score: A dream-self's Strength score is equal to his Wisdom score, for willpower equates to strength in dream realities. The character's physical Strength score can modify the dream Strength score, as a physically weak or powerful character will expect to be similarly weak or powerful in a dream. This adjustment is the same as the damage adjustment associated with the physical Strength score (see Table 1 in the *Player's Handbook*). In no case will the adjustment lower a score below 3 or raise it above 18/00. Count each step of exceptional Strength as one point (18 + 1 becomes 18/01, 18 + 2 becomes 18/51, and so on).

For example, Thorin has a Wisdom score of 12. This makes his dream-self's Strength score 12 as well. However, his physical Strength score of 17 has a damage adjustment of +1. This is added to the dream Strength to give Thorin's dream-self a Strength score of 13 (12 + 1 = 13).

Dexterity Score: A dream-self's Dexterity score is equal to the character's Intelligence score, for Intelligence measures a character's

mental agility. The character's physical Dexterity score can modify this number, as dexterous or clumsy characters continue to perceive themselves as such even in dreams. This adjustment is the same as the defensive adjustment of the physical Dexterity score, though the bonuses for high Dexterity are counted as pluses and the penalties for low Dexterity are counted as minuses. In no case will the adjustment lower a score below 3 or raise it above 18.

For example, Thorin has an Intelligence score of 14. This gives his dream-self a Dexterity of 14. However, his physical Dexterity score of 18 provides a defensive adjustment of –4 (counted as a +4 in this case). This is added to the dream Dexterity to give Thorin's dream-self a Dexterity score of 18 (14 + 4 = 18).

Other Characteristics

How do the rest of a character's statistics translate into a dream-self? In many cases, there are no changes unless the dream scene itself imposes them. A dream-self's base characteristics are determined as follows.

Alignment: A dream-self's alignment is the same as that of his waking character. However, a character's alignment can have some affect on certain types of dreams and nightmares.

Dreams, by their very nature, are chaotic. For this reason, when a dream becomes particularly chaotic and frenzied, lawful and neutral characters operate at a disadvantage. They make all die rolls with a –1 penalty.

Armor Class: A dream-self usually carries the same equipment as his waking character. This means that a dream-self's Armor Class is the same as the waking character's, though be sure to check the dream-self's Dexterity bonus as the dream Dexterity is different from the waking Dexterity.

Movement Rate: A dream-self has the same movement rate as his waking character.

Hit Points: A character's dream-self always begins a dream scene with the character's total hit points, even if the character has recently suffered damage and isn't currently at his maximum. This reflects the character's ideal view of himself. In some cases, a dream or nightmare may dictate that the dream-self enters the scene with less than maximum hit points. Such a case would be if a wounded character were to experience a nightmare about the pain and damage he suffered.

If a dream-self experiences multiple dream scenes in a single period of sleep, it falls to the DM and the nature of the dream scenes to determine how hit points are recorded. Some nights, a dream-self's hit points are calculated from one scene to the next, losing or gaining hit points as though each scene was a continuation of the one before. On other nights, each scene is considered a separate situation, and the dream-self's hit point total is determined by the nature of each scene. There is no continuation in these scenes; the hit point total rises and falls to match each situation.

In dreamscapes controlled by the Nightmare Court, every scene that takes place during a particular period of sleep is considered to be a continuation of the one before, even if the scenes seem to have no common threads. A dream-self enters a Court dreamscape with all his hit points. Each encounter may result in the loss of some of those hit points. The losses continue until the dreamer wakes up, at which point the player might be required to make a mental weakness or death check for his character (see "Combat in Dreamscapes" on page 18).

THAC0: A character's dream-self has the same THAC0 as he has in the waking world. Certain modifiers might affect a dream-self's attack rolls, depending on the nature of the dream scene.

Equipment: Any item that a character considers to be an integral part of his persona usually translates over with the dream-self. A warrior's favored weapons or a wizard's staff would appear along with these characters' dream-selves. The wizard's dream-self probably won't be carrying a two-handed sword, however, or even some lesser piece of normal equipment that doesn't have some meaningful connection to his persona.

Sometimes the nature of a dream will cause expected equipment to be missing, or a nightmare might make a weapon work poorly. In a nightmare, for example, the wizard's spell book won't be in his pack, or his *wand of magic missiles* will function as a *wand of size alteration* instead.

Character Classes

A character's class determines some fundamental aspects of his nature that are carried over into the dream-self. These are discussed below.

Warrior Classes: While warriors come in many varieties, they are all defined by their physical attributes. Of these, physical strength is the most important aspect of a warrior's nature. For this reason, warriors don't translate perfectly into their dream personas, as Wisdom defines their dream Strength. They usually find themselves at a disadvantage in nightmares unless they have sufficient *inner strength* to alter their dream-selves to match their own self-image (see "Inner Strength" on page 25).

Wizard Classes: Wizards are defined by their mental attributes, in particular by their intelligence. For this reason, wizards' dream-selves usually have high dream Dexterity scores. In dream scenes, wizards usually have access to all their spells, though certain scenes can produce unexpected results.

Because of the nature of the magic they study, illusionists have the easiest time in dream scenes. Illusionists make all die rolls in dream scenes with a +1 bonus.

Priest Classes: Priests are defined not only by their mental attributes, but also by the faith that sustains them and gives them purpose. Both of these help create particularly strong dream personas. Priests' usually high Wisdom scores translate into a high dream Strength scores, making them tougher in dreams than in the waking world.

Rogue Classes: While many rogues pride themselves on their wits, the defining aspect of a rogue's true nature is his Dexterity. For this reason, rogue characters don't translate perfectly into their dream personas, as Intelligence defines dream Dexterity.

Because of the natural creativity associated with them, bards have an easier time in dream scenes. Bards make all die rolls in dream scenes with a +1 bonus.

Psionicist Class: Psionicists are masters of their own minds, with high scores in both mental attributes. For this reason, psionicists' dream personas might be more powerful in certain ways than their waking selves, as naturally high mental abilities translate into high dream Strength and Dexterity scores. In addition, psionic powers work just as they do in the waking world with an added benefit. Psionic attacks and defenses can be used to create weapons and armor in the dream scenes.

Each of these psionic weapons and armor lasts for one round (though see "Inner Strength" on page 25). Against another psionicist's dream-self, the weapons (attack modes) and armor (defense modes) clash according to the Attack vs. Defense Modes table in *The Complete Psionics Handbook*. Otherwise, the dream weaponry created by using these psionic attacks and defenses are considered to be enchanted for purposes of harming creatures that can only be hit by magical weapons. These psionic/dream constructs have the following statistics. Note that a dream-self psionicist can only use one weapon (attack mode) and one armor (defense mode) in a round. He can't combine a thought shield with an intellect fortress, for example.

Ego Whip: Creates a glowing whip that inflicts 1d6 points of damage. It can harm creatures that can only be hit by a +1 weapon or better.

Id Insinuation: Creates a glowing warhammer that inflicts 1d8 points of damage. It can harm creatures that can only be hit by a +2 weapon or better.

Mind Thrust: Creates a glowing dagger that inflicts 1d4 points of damage. It can harm creatures that can only be hit by a +1 weapon or better.

Psionic Blast: Creates a glowing crossbow and bolt that inflicts 1d12 points of damage but can only be used as a ranged weapon. It can harm creatures that can only be hit by a +3 weapon or better.

Psychic Crush: Creates a glowing mace that inflicts 1d10 points of damage. It can harm creatures that can only be hit by a +2 weapon or better.

Intellect Fortress: This defense creates the dream equivalent of hide armor, providing an Armor Class of 6.

Mental Barrier: This defense creates the dream equivalent of chain mail armor, providing an Armor Class of 5.

Mind Blank: This defense creates the dream equivalent of ring mail armor, providing an Armor Class of 7.

Thought Shield: This defense creates the dream equivalent of leather armor, providing an Armor Class of 8.

Tower of Iron Will: This defense creates the dream equivalent of plate armor, providing an Armor Class of 3.

The Levels of Reality

The different levels of reality, discussed briefly elsewhere, are defined and detailed below. Note that the first, second, and third levels of reality operate with some differences in the Nightmare Lands. These exceptions and alterations are highlighted for easy reference, as are other important rules.

Level 1 Reality: Dreams

Most of the first level of reality consists of what are commonly called "dreams." People, places, and things are real in and of themselves at this level, but nothing has a lasting effect beyond the moment at hand. Everything at this level is fleeting and insubstantial, here one moment and gone the next.

This level of reality is confined to the dream plane, though there are areas where dreams intrude on higher reality levels. In most cases, these intrusions are brief and quickly forgotten due to the usually unbelievable experiences such intrusions incur. For example, when someone glimpses a fantastic sight out of the corner of his eye that disappears when viewed head on, or when strange objects appear briefly in the sky and wink out of existence, or when a surreal light falls upon a mundane place and makes it momentarily magical, these are indications that the dream plane has touched the waking world.

Such events are rare on prime worlds, but happen with some degree of frequency in places like the Demiplane of Dread. The only place known to be permanently touched by this level of reality, other than the dream plane, is the Nightmare Lands.

Anything that can be imagined can happen in this level of reality. When a person's dream-self interacts with a dream scene, it doesn't matter what events take place. Nothing has a lasting effect. Dream-selves can be injured, maimed, or even killed in a dream and their characters wake up with only sweaty sheets and a lingering feeling of unease.

Movement in dreams is purely a function of the dream scene. Scenes may change instantaneously, transporting a dreamer to a new location in the blink of an eye, or travel may become frighteningly slow, as though even the smallest distances have been distorted. It all depends on the nature of the scene unfolding in this level of reality.

Vivid Dreams and Nightmares

Only events in extremely vivid dreams and nightmares have the slightest chance of carrying over into the waking world (level 3 reality). Any dream has only a 5% chance of being a vivid dream. They don't occur very often, and certainly not more than once in a given month. (More frequent experiences of vivid dreams, especially of the nightmare variety, could be an indication of the work of the Nightmare Court.)

A *vivid dream* contains scenes of vibrant happiness and good will, such as reliving a particularly memorable occasion in excruciating detail or experiencing a wonderful, uplifting dream featuring a heart's desire. A *vivid nightmare* produces frightening images and emotions that not only cause a dreamer to awaken abruptly, but linger well into the waking hours.

To determine the effect of a particularly vivid dream, the dreamer must make a system shock roll. (Not every dream or nightmare requires this roll, only those that have some chance of lingering once the dreamer returns to the waking world.)

A vivid dream modifies the system shock roll with a +5% bonus. If the roll required for a vivid dream succeeds, the dreamer receives a +1 bonus to all die rolls for the next 24 hours due to his jubilant mood. A vivid nightmare modifies the roll with a –25% penalty. If the roll required for a nightmare fails, the dreamer receives a –1 penalty to all die rolls for 24 hours due to his unease and nervousness. Rolls of 96% or better are considered to be failures, no matter how high the modified number is.

For example, Thorin suffers through a traumatic and extremely vivid nightmare in which he sees his best friend die horribly. He must make a system shock roll upon awaking, rolling the modified percentage or less to withstand the lingering effects of the bad dream. His base chance is 85%. With the penalty, he must roll 60% or less (85 – 25 = 60). He rolls an 83%, which means that for the next 24 hours he makes all attack, damage, saving throw, and ability check rolls with a –1 penalty due to the unease caused by the lingering nightmare images.

Level 2 Reality: Dreamscapes

The second level of reality is more tangible than the one before it. Like level 1, this level also consists of dreams. The difference is that these are dreams with substance. Events that happen in this reality can have a lasting effect on the waking world, and dreamers damaged or killed here wind up mentally scarred or dead upon returning to level 3 reality.

This level of reality occupies *dreamscapes*, pocket dimensions specifically formed to contain it. These pocket dimensions form in the dream plane, although in rare instances they can appear briefly in the Prime Material Plane. A powerful entity's dream, sleep visions produced by significant events, or even certain spells or dream-related powers can cause a dreamscape to form briefly in the prime.

Wherever dreamscapes appear, the characteristic that defines all of them is their fleeting nature—when the dream contained within a dreamscape ends, the dreamscape collapses and disappears.

The exception to this rule is the dreamscapes of the Ring of Dreams in the Nightmare Lands. These spheres of dream reality were created by the members of the Nightmare Court, and these foul beings provide the energy to keep the spheres intact even when no dreams or nightmares play within their infinite interiors.

In all cases, the energy needed to power a dream scene within a particular dreamscape comes from a dreamer. Only one dreamer ever provides the power for a dreamscape, and when this occurs that dreamer is called the *seed*. The seed provides both the energy to form this reality, as well as the creativity that builds the scenes and populates them.

As with level 1 reality, anything that can be imagined can happen within the dreamscapes. However, due to the nature of the dreamscapes and the power provided by the deepest fears and desires of the dreamers, events here do have a lasting effect on the waking world. Typically, events in a dreamscape won't be more uplifting or traumatic than events in normal dreams (level 1 reality). The potential exists, however, for *mental weakness, insanity,* or even *death* to occur as a result of dreamscape events. Benefits can also be gained in a dreamscape, including *experience, mental fortitude,* and *inner strength*.

A dreamer usually appears as he or she does in the waking world, though certain traits may be more prominent in the dreamscape. A character's dreamscape form is called his *dream-self*. In typical dreamscapes, a dreamer brings with him those things that make up who he is. So, a warrior will have his sword, a wizard his spells, a thief his tools, and a priest his holy symbol. In dreams, these may function even better than they do in the waking world, as they become stylized icons of what they really are. In nightmares, they might become weaker or even useless, thus adding to the horror. Some dreamers can learn to alter their appearance and equipment to suit the dreamscape. And some beings, like the members of the Nightmare Court, can affect everything in a dreamscape, changing the scenery, the props, and even the appearance of the dreamers to suit their own desires.

Inside Dreamscapes

Not every dream scene that plays out inside a dreamscape is a wondrous dream or a terrible nightmare. Most dream scenes are merely common dreams, replays of past events or mental stories created by the bubbling soup of each dreamer's subconscious. In typical dreams, unless some other power is at work, reality functions more or less as it does in the waking world. There are no significant modifiers to rules, though the scenes still have surreal qualities and possibly even some strange, otherworldly turns (though these usually seem normal to the dreamer).

Some dreams, however, are rare—wondrously uplifting or extremely terrifying. A *wondrously uplifting dream* is one where everything is in the dreamer's favor and fate itself seems to be on his side. An *extremely terrifying nightmare* is one where everything is against the dreamer and even fate seems to be working to destroy him.

If a dream is wondrously uplifting, the dreamer finds himself with the upper hand. All die rolls made by the character's dream-self receive a +2 bonus, and all rolls made against the dream-self receive a –2 penalty. In some dreams, the DM can increase the bonus to as high as +4 and the penalty to –4, but these kinds of "nothing-can-go-wrong" dreams don't occur very often. A dreamscape dream can be of the wondrous variety (as opposed to a common dream) 15% of the time. Of these, 5%

can be of the "nothing-can-go-wrong" variety.

If a dream takes on the quality of a nightmare, the dreamer is suddenly thrust into the worst possible situation. All die rolls made by the character's dream-self receive a –2 penalty, and all rolls made against the dream-self receive a +2 bonus. A rare, particularly frightening nightmare can increase the dream-self's penalty to –4 and the bonus against him to +4. Nightmares occur 20% of the time, while 10% of these are particularly frightening. Circumstances in the waking world, such as war or terrible misfortune, can increase the frequency of extremely terrifying nightmares.

Movement in a dreamscape, in most cases, also depends on the nature of the dream. As in level 1 reality, scenes can shift or extend distances as the dream or nightmare dictates. However, in cases when movement does become important, a dream-self can move at the same rate as his waking counterpart.

The Triggering Event

Both wondrous dreams and extremely terrifying nightmares usually have a *triggering event* that sets them off. A triggering event is some occurrence in the waking world that lingers in a character's subconscious and produces either dreams or nightmares.

A triggering event for a dream could be any significant occurrence with overtones of good fortune or exaltation. Successfully completing a long quest, falling deeply in love, or finding spiritual enlightenment are all examples of good triggering events.

Nightmares, conversely, have darker triggering events that border on mental trauma. Tragic occurrences, frightening situations, and experiences centered around guilt, remorse, or shame can all become triggering events. Triggering events are important in Nightmare Lands adventures.

Combat in Dreamscapes

In dreamscapes, a character's Wisdom score is used as his dream-self's Strength score, and his Intelligence score is used as his dream-self's Dexterity. His perceived THAC0 and AC usually match the waking world counterparts, though they may change depending on the type of dream scene taking place. (See "Creating Dream-Selves" on page 10.)

Combat follows the normal rules of the waking world (level 3 reality) unless one or more participants have dream powers (see page 30). In most normal dreamscape scenes, the dreamer interacts with people, places, and things dredged up from his own subconscious and given substance by the reality of the dreamscape. In dreamscapes controlled by the Nightmare Court, dreamers could be interacting with other dreamers, dream spawn, or some other creatures provided by the Court. In both cases the results have their own reality, and the effects can be devastating to the dreamer.

Because belief has power, and because much of level 2 reality is formed by belief, attacks in a dreamscape produce the same effects as in the waking world (using the normal AD&D combat rules). A dreamer whose dream-self gets hit by a long sword expects to suffer 1d8 points of damage and does. (The reverse is also true; the dream-self expects his long sword to inflict 1d8 points of damage on his foe and it usually does.)

Effects of Dreamscape Combat

Unless some other power is at work, or if a dream scene shapes itself in such a way as to change the rules on the dreamer, the dreamer's weapons, psionics, and spells work as they do in the waking world. Combat in a dreamscape affects waking characters in several ways, depending on the results of that combat. These effects include *mental weakness, coma, death, madness, inner strength, mental fortitude,* and *experience.*

Mental Weakness

If a dream-self suffers physical damage, this can translate into mental weakness for the dreamer. If a dream-self is reduced to less than half his total hit points, upon waking the dreamer must make a save vs. death magic. If the save fails, the character temporarily loses 1d2 points of Intelligence. Intelligence points lost in this way are regained at a rate of 1 point per day if the character makes a successful system shock roll. (A day is defined as 24 hours, so could include the character's next period of sleep.) For the purposes of this roll, rolls of 96% or higher are always considered to be failures. A failed system shock roll indicates that the lost point of Intelligence remains lost—the character's Intelligence score is permanently reduced by 1 point.

This temporarily lose of Intelligence points affects a character's dream-self. If a dream-self returns to a dreamscape before the lost Intelligence points are restored, his dream Dexterity is reduced to match the new score.

Characters who lose Intelligence due to mental weakness and are reduced to a score of 0 immediately fall into a *coma.*

Coma

If dream scenes cause a character to suffer mental weakness and reduce his Intelligence score to 0, that character immediately falls into a *coma.* A coma is a deep state of prolonged unconsciousness. While in a coma, the character's dream-self remains trapped in whatever dreamscape caused the mental weakness, continuously suffering the nightmarish events. Only if someone goes into the dreamscape and frees the dream-self before the waking body fails can a character in a coma be saved.

Every day that the coma lasts, a check must be made to determine if the character's body fails and death overcomes him. To make this check, follow these rules.

Each day after a character falls into this kind of coma, add a parenthetical "1" next to the 0 Intelligence score. So, on the first day, it would look like 0 (1), on the second day 0 (2), and so on. Roll 1d20 once each day for the check. If the number rolled is *less than* the parenthetical number, the character dies. For example, on the sixth day of the coma, the coma score is 0 (6). If the player rolls less than 6 on 1d20, the character dies. If the roll is 6 or greater, then the character lives for another day and rescue attempts can be made.

Death

If a dream-self suffers enough damage in a dreamscape to reduce his hit points to less than 0, the results to the waking character can be devastating. First, the waking character is immediately expelled from the dreamscape and must make a successful Wisdom check to overcome the belief that true death has claimed him. If the check succeeds, the waking character suffers no physical damage. If the check fails, the character suffers 4d10 points of physical damage caused by the mental trauma of the dream death. In addition, whether the Wisdom check succeeds or not, the character must check for mental weakness as described on page 18. Finally, such a character must make a madness check (see below) to determine if the episode shatters his sanity.

Madness

Because dreamscapes are so tied to the minds of the dreamers who visit them, the fragile walls of sanity can often be cracked or even completely shattered by events in this reality. Nightmares can inspire madness that manifests not in the dream-self, but in the waking character.

Madness Checks

Dreams are windows into the very core of a person's mind, revealing dark secrets and hidden desires. Is it any wonder that madness sometimes explodes from this core, especially when the reality of the dream plane intrudes on the waking world? When a dream scene becomes so traumatic or horrifying that the shell of sanity around the mental core begins to crack, then a *madness check* is required.

When is a dreamer required to make a madness check? When a dream-self suffers enough damage to reduce his hit points to 0 or less, or when a dreamer witnesses a particularly terrifying scene, or when a long-hidden and horrifying truth is revealed by a dreamer's subconscious, then madness checks are required.

Madness suffered in the waking world is detailed in the RAVENLOFT® *Realm of Terror* rules book. Madness inspired by events in a dreamscape use the rules presented here.

To make a madness check, a dreamer rolls a saving throw vs. paralyzation. Wisdom bonuses normally applied to saves against mental affects can be applied to this check. Success indicates that the dreamer is disturbed by the experience, but his mental faculties are able to otherwise absorb the shock. Failure indicates that some part of the dreamer's psyche is crushed by the dream event. The table on page 20 features the forms of insanity already familiar to the RAVENLOFT campaign and adds two new mental distresses: *phobias* and *anxieties*. Both were created specifically for use with dreamscape adventures. Note that these forms of mental distress are not intended to reflect exact medical definitions. They are designed to provide new challenges in a role-playing game session.

Failed Madness Check Results

Roll 1d8	Mental Distress
1	Schizophrenia
2	Severe Depression
3	Delusions
4	Paranoia
5	Hallucinations
6	Amnesia
7	Phobia
8	Anxiety

Descriptions of Mental Distresses

Below are the game descriptions for the results of failed madness checks. These forms of insanity and mental distress can affect any characters who venture too deeply into the second level of reality. Though these mental illnesses are caused by events in dream reality, they manifest in the waking world and usually don't follow a dreamer into sleep.

Note that these rules are not complete unto themselves. They require the additional madness rules found in the *Realms of Terror*, one of the books in the RAVENLOFT campaign boxed set.

Schizophrenia: In the waking world, this disease fragments the mind into several specialized personalities, each of which is capable of dealing with only one particular situation. Characters who develop this illness as a result of a dreamscape incident suffer the same effects. One of the fragmented personalities, however, is usually a dream-self from a particularly memorable nightmare—generally from the one that produced this result. If the character's dream-self was a close copy of his waking self, then the personality is the same except that it believes it is still within the dreamscape when it comes to the forefront in the waking world. If, however, the dreamer had become someone or something else in the dream scene, this is the personality that he should develop as part of the schizophrenia.

Severe Depression: When a character suffers from this illness, he or she losses the will to take action and wants nothing more than to be left alone. Severe depression is more often linked with a triggering event than a dream scene. If a sufferer is the dream seed, then this condition should be tied directly to whatever event triggered the creation of his dreamscape. Other sufferers should feel guilty or ashamed of their actions in some situation that occurred near the time this affliction set in. Perhaps they feel they have let a friend down. Or they might feel outclassed by the dreams that torment them and thus become resigned to their fate.

Depressed characters are 50% likely to do nothing in a given situation, regardless of the threat. If they suffer damage and roll greater than 50%, they fight back recklessly and refuse to retreat. They are not being heroic. They simply refuse to care about what happens.

Delusions: Dreamers who suffer from delusions after a dream scene episode have trouble discerning the waking world from a dreamscape. The day after a nightmare, the character acts as if he is still in whatever dreamscape was the focus of the previous night's dream scene. If the nightmare took place in an underwater world where the dreamer was a fish, then he spends the next day believing that he is a fish and that the air is water. This illness doesn't crush a character's survival instinct, but trying to perform the same feats that were possible for the character's dream-self can be deadly.

A delusion may change after each trip into a dreamscape until a cure is applied.

Paranoia: Paranoia is an unreasoning fear of others, and those who suffer from it see plots and schemes everywhere. Characters experiencing paranoia due to a dream event often mistake events that occurred in a dreamscape with those that happen in the waking world. A paladin who dreamed of his friends betraying him in a dream scene might later forget that he is now awake and that his friends are loyal companions. When his madness takes over, he may draw his sword and try to punish them for deeds they never committed.

Paranoids are like those who suffer from delusions in one sense. If they believe they are in a dream scene, they may try things that work in a dreamscape but will injure or kill them in the waking world. For example, a paranoid hero might jump into a lake to escape his "treacherous companions," thinking he can breath water as he did in a recent nightmare. The DM must decide if the mental distress incorporates the dream scene into events happening in the waking world, or the following system can be used.

Whenever a companion says something that the DM thinks could be misinterpreted by the paranoid, the affected character must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation. If failed, the character believes he is back in the dream scene that inspired the paranoia. Besides expecting whatever strange laws worked in his dreamscape to work while he's awake, the character also believes that those around him are mere illusions created by his subconscious and thus isn't concerned about using violence.

Hallucinations: Victims who suffer from hallucinations see beings and things from recent dream scenes in the waking world. If a dream involving an evil treant caused the character's madness, the character might believe that every tree he sees is that creature,

or at least one of its servants. The hallucinator might also see everything in the context of a dream scene. A dreamer who spent the previous night in a dream scene of a necropolis, for example, might see everyone around him as undead zombies.

Hallucinations should come and go. After any stressful event such as a confrontation with a friend, haggling with a vendor, or especially combat, a sufferer should make a saving throw vs. paralyzation. If the roll fails, the character spends the next 2d10 turns believing that the people, places, and things around him are from some dreamscape he has visited in the past. The DM should keep these rolls secret so that the player never knows when his character is seeing things, or if something is really there.

Amnesia: Nightmare-induced amnesia rarely follows the course of true amnesia. Instead of remembering nothing about his life, a nightmare amnesiac forgets the triggering event that inspired his latest nightmare, as well as any details concerning the accompanying dream scenes. This madness would almost be a blessing if not for several factors.

First, all amnesiacs suffer a –2 penalty to all Intelligence checks. Wizards and priests spend double the usual amount of time to memorize or pray for spells, and psionicists recover PSPs at half the normal rate. This is because the character spends most of his waking hours trying to remember what it is that he has forgotten. He knows that something bothers him, but he can't quite figure out what. While in this distracted state of mind, the character is unable to concentrate on mundane matters.

The second effect of nightmare-induced amnesia is that the victim occasionally experiences horrific visions of whatever it is his mind has suppressed. These visions are mere flashes of terror or macabre familiarity, and are always triggered by some vaguely similar event in the waking world. Whenever a vision strikes, the character is *stunned* until he makes a saving throw vs. paralyzation (which can be attempted once per round). While stunned, a character desperately tries to remember the past and may not take any other actions.

Finally, amnesiacs occasionally experience "blackouts." The DM makes a check twice per day in secret to determine if an amnesiac blacks out. A blackout check should only be made at the start of a stressful situation. To make a check, the DM rolls 1d6. On a roll of 1, a blackout occurs. It lasts through the end of the next encounter or stressful situation. At the end of that time, the character needs to make a saving throw vs. paralyzation to remember the events which occurred during the blackout. If the save fails, the period is a complete blank to the character (although visions of the blacked-out events may surface later).

Role-playing Amnesiacs: Role playing nightmare-induced amnesia can be difficult for a number of reasons. First, if the madness occurred well into an adventure, the rest of the party will be able to fill in whatever details the character can't remember. While this certainly takes a bit of the horror out of the situation, the mechanics of the madness still apply as the victim tries to remember the events for himself.

Second, a character may forget a traumatic circumstance because the rules say he must, but a player can't simply put it out of his mind. Role-playing an amnesiac is a challenge for even experienced role-players, and can also be frustrating if the hero must go back and uncover all of the things that he had already discovered earlier. One way to correct this problem is to integrate in *new* factors that neither the character *nor* the player are aware of. This type of situation is extremely plot dependent, but can make for a very deep and mysterious session if handled correctly.

Phobia: Phobias are a new form of mental distress that characters may suffer after a trip

into a dreamscape. A phobia occurs when a dreamer is terrified by a nightmare and that fear accompanies him back to the waking world. In the waking world, however, the fear isn't tied to the nightmare but to the triggering event. The fear is so acute that the character can't function properly in the trigger's presence.

If the triggering event was an encounter with a horrendous beast or something that should obviously be feared anyway, then the character suffers an *associative* phobia. This means that some circumstance or item *associated* with the event triggers the condition. For example, if a werewolf killed the character's companion in a forest and this led to a series of nightmares in which the character's dream-self failed a madness check, the waking character could become deathly afraid of the wilderness (as he is probably already afraid of werewolves.

Phobiacs tremble at anything related to their fear. The primary trigger evokes *great fear*, and related sources evoke *lesser fear*. A character who was mauled by sharks, for instance, would have a great fear of sharks, and a lesser fear of seas or oceans due to nightmare-inspired madness.

Whenever the feared thing or being is within sight, the phobiac becomes extremely nervous and agitated. He tries to avoid it at all costs. The character must stay at least 50 feet away from inanimate objects related to the triggering event, and must flee from living, ambulatory beings or creatures related to it. The character may not attack those things that he greatly fears for he is afraid of attracting their attention. Lesser feared creatures or beings may be attacked from a distance with a penalty of –2 to all attack rolls.

Occasionally a character will have to face down his fear. A hero may attempt to do so once per encounter. To face down a phobia, the character must be in the presence of the triggering event and make a standard fear

check. Apply a –4 penalty to this roll if the trigger is a great fear, and a –2 penalty if the trigger is a lesser fear. If the roll is failed, the hero can't summon the willpower to overcome the fear and must attempt to distance himself. If the roll is successful, the character can ignore the distancing rules and even move into melee, though with a –2 penalty to all attack rolls.

Anxiety: Some victims of nightmare-induced madness suffer severe sleep deprivation, which in turn, causes *anxiety*. Anxiety is a state of intense fear and dread lacking an unambiguous cause or a specific threat. The character's reeling, petrified mind isn't given time to recuperate either because he is also afraid to sleep. The character's day is spent wishing that he could sleep peacefully and forget about his unidentified fears. His night, however, is spent trying desperately to stay awake because he is afraid to close his eyes and give himself over to the darkness. It's a terrible paradox. The victim goes for several days without sleep, severely distressed because he knows that sleep must eventually overtake him.

There is only a 25% chance that the character will be able to sleep on any given night. This chance increases by +5% each night thereafter until the character can't help but collapse in exhaustion. He might doze fitfully on those nights the roll is not made, but he won't truly sleep. On the nights he can't stay awake, his chance of being drawn into a dreamscape to relive the madness-inducing nightmare is 60%.

The incredible stress of trying to stay awake wrecks the victim's body. Black circles form under blood-shot eyes, characters lose weight, and muscles lose definition. This is represented in the game by a slow but steady lose of Constitution points. For every night in which an anxious character can't sleep (determined by a roll of 26% or greater as explained above), that character reduces his Constitution score by 1 point. This loss is temporary; it returns at a rate of 1 point per night of restful sleep once the character recovers from this form of madness.

If a character's Constitution score drops to 0 before a recovery is made, the character falls into a deep sleep from which he can only awaken on his own. As this deep sleep overcomes him, the character must make a save vs. death magic or die as his body tries to correct the lack of rest. If the save succeeds, roll 1d10. This is the number of days the character remains locked in sleep. After the days pass, the character wakes up with his Constitution score restored to the same number as the amount of days he slept (but not more than his starting score). The process begins again until the character finds a way to recover from the madness.

In addition, any physical wounds heal more slowly while a character suffers from anxiety. Until the character recovers, his natural healing rate is cut in half. Also, psionic strength points are recovered at half the normal rate, and spells take twice as long to memorize.

Recovering from Madness

Madness inspired by dreams and nightmares is just as real and as devastating as the madness inspired by events in the waking world. A character suffers from nightmare-induced madness until cured through one of the methods detailed in the *Realms of Terror* book, until the character overcomes the problem in the dream scene (see "Mental Fortitude" on page 26 for more details), or until one of Dr. Illhousen's new treatments is used (see page 58).

Fear and Horror Checks

Fear and horror checks should be used in dreamscapes that have a nightmarish quality to them. These checks work just as they are detailed in the *Realms of Terror* book. Of

course, as nightmares tend to feed off of the fear and horror they inspire, sometimes failing one of these checks can lead to even greater levels of terror.

For example, a fearstruck dream-self immediately wants to run away. However, the nightmare might decide to continue by making such an option very difficult to accomplish. A dream-self's feet might turn into roots and hold him in place; or the distance to a place of safety might suddenly increase a hundredfold; or every turn the dream-self makes as he flees leads right back to the thing that frightened him in the first place.

Horror checks require an additional mechanic in dreamscapes. If a dream-self fails a horror check, immediately have the character make a second horror check to determine whether the character wakes up due to the terror inspired by the nightmare. If the second check succeeds, the dream scene continues; apply the penalties associated with the failed horror check to the rest of the dream scene. If the second check fails, the dreamer immediately wakes up in a cold sweat; apply the penalties associated with the failed horror check to the character in the waking world.

Inner Strength

Inner strength is a combination of courage, will power, and sense of purpose that allows a character to face adversity head on. In game terms, characters accumulate *inner strength points*. There are two ways to accumulate inner strength points: through *vivid dreams* (level 1 reality, see page 14) and through *wondrously uplifting dreams* (level 2 reality, see page 16).

Both vivid dreams and wondrously uplifting dreams can fill a character with inner strength. When a dream-self participates in either type of dream, the waking character must make a successful system shock roll to gain inner strength from the inspiring scene. For purposes of this roll, rolls of 96% or higher are considered failures, no matter what the character's system shock rating is.

A successful system shock roll after a vivid dream earns a character 1 inner strength point. A successful roll after a wondrously uplifting dream earns 2 inner strength points.

The number of inner strength points a character can store depends on the character's Wisdom score: Wisdom 7 or less, 2 points; Wisdom 8–14, 3 points; Wisdom 15–17, 4 points; Wisdom 18 or higher, 5 points.

One inner strength point can be used by the waking character to automatically succeed at one fear, horror, madness, or Wisdom check. Two inner strength points can be used to withstand the effects of any one spell from the charm school or sphere of magic.

In additon, different character classes can spend inner strength points in dreamscapes to accomplish certain things. These are detailed below.

Warrior Classes: Because physical strength is so much a part of who and what a warrior is, warriors can use inner strength points to temporarily increase their dream Strength scores to match (but not exceed) their physical Strength scores. One inner strength point boosts a warrior's dream Strength score for one turn.

Wizard Classes: Wizards can use inner strength points to cause spells to work in dreamscapes like they do in the waking world for one turn. During this turn, the wizard who spent the point is immune to any dream effects that would cause his spells to behave contrary to normal.

Priest Classes: Like wizards, priests can spend inner strength points to keep the nature of dream scenes from affecting their spells. Because belief is central to a priest's nature and belief also helps give dream reality substance, one inner strength point allows a priest to use his spells without hindrance for two turns.

Rogue Classes: Because physical dexterity is so much a part of who and what a rogue is, rogues can use inner strength points to temporarily increase their dream Dexterity scores to match (but not exceed) their physical Dexterity scores. One inner strength point boosts a rogue's dream Dexterity score for one turn.

Psionicist Class: If a psionicist spends one inner strength point at the moment of a dream weapon's creation, its existence is extended to one turn instead of one round (see page 13).

Mental Fortitude

The Nightmare Court searches the dream plane for nightmares to draw power from. When it finds one, it captures the dreamer and pulls him into the Nightmare Lands. From that point on, the dreamer's dream-self is imprisoned in one of the Court's permanent dreamscapes until he finds a way to escape or the Court is finished with him. To escape, the dreamer must build up enough *mental fortitude* to break the chains that bind his dream-self.

Mental fortitude is a measure of a character's perseverance and steadfastness that increases with each success against the rigors of nightmare. Any experience in a dreamscape that doesn't have a negative result helps the dreamer build mental fortitude.

Inner strength is an aspect of this tenacity, but mental fortitude is larger and more comprehensive. Think of mental fortitude as a great defense that slowly steels the mind against horror and doubt. Inner strength can help accomplish tasks in a dream scene and even in the waking world; mental fortitude can banish illusions and the terrors of bad dreams—the tools of the Nightmare Court.

In game terms, mental fortitude is measured in points that are gained every time a dreamer succeeds at a roll instigated by a negative dreamscape event. The rolls that provide mental fortitude points are checks for mental weakness (see page 18), death (page 19), madness (page 19), and fear and horror (page 24). Each point earned increases a character's *mental fortitude rating*.

The Purpose of Mental Fortitude: When a character experiences some traumatic event that inspires terrible nightmares, he or she can attract the attention of the Nightmare Court. If this happens, the character's dream-self becomes a dream seed in one of the Court's permanent dreamscapes, providing images and energy for dream scenes. As the seed's terror builds, the Nightmare Court acquires more of the energy it needs to survive.

Every dreamscape controlled by the Nightmare Court has an overseer. An overseer is either a lesser or greater dream spawn, or even a member of the Court itself, who keeps the dream seed in a constant state of ever-increasing fear. At the start of a period of imprisonment, the overseer is practically invulnerable to all attacks. An overseer might seemingly be defeated in one dream scene, but it appears in the next one without any appreciable signs of damage. To dreamers, the situation looks hopeless.

What gives an overseer such power? The dream seed does, due to the mental trauma produced by the triggering event that first caught the Nightmare Court's attention. To escape from this dream prison, a dreamer must overcome the mental distress that instigated the nightmare in the first place. This requires the accumulation of mental fortitude.

Gaining Mental Fortitude: A dream seed starts with no mental fortitude but gains points by overcoming obstacles in dreams scenes.

Each successful mental weakness check earns the waking dreamer 1d6 points.

Each successful death check earns the waking dreamer 1d8 points of mental fortitude.

Each successful fear, horror, or madness check made in response to a dream scene earns 1d4 points of mental fortitude.

Other dreamers can help a dream seed accumulate mental fortitude. A dreamer who isn't a dream seed but participates in dream scenes tied to the dream seed's dreamscape can give the dream seed up to half of the mental fortitude points he earns. These points are subtracted from the dreamer's rating.

When the Nightmare Court uses dream powers in a dreamscape, the dream seed gets to add the cost of those powers to his mental fortitude rating (see page 30). However, if the dream seed decides to use a dream power of his own, the cost for that power is subtracted from his mental fortitude rating.

Using Mental Fortitude to Break the Court's Hold: Mental fortitude increases with every dream obstacle that a dreamer overcomes. Each success helps convince the dream seed of his own worth and ability, thus making it easier to put the trauma that triggered the mental distress behind him.

How much mental fortitude is needed to escape from a particular dreamscape? That depends on a number of circumstances. The mental fortitude total needed is called the *inner peace number.* Only when a dream seed's mental fortitude rises high enough does he have the inner peace necessary to put his fear behind him and defeat the Nightmare Court.

Three things determine a dream seed's inner peace number: the emotional impact of the triggering event, the dream seed's Intelligence score, and the power level of the Court member controlling the dreamscape.

The base number a dream seed needs to achieve inner peace is determined by the trauma at the root of his triggering event. Equate the triggering event to one of the situations below and find the base number.

"Lvl" stands for the dream seed's level of experience. So, if the dream seed is a 4th-level ranger, "Lvl –1" results in a base number of 3 (4 – 1 = 3).

Base Number	Triggering Event
Lvl –2	Witnessing the grisly death of an unknown person; failing an important task, resulting in personal suffering
Lvl –1	Learning of the death of an acquaintance; failing a task that results in others suffering
Lvl	Failing a task due to selfishness or personal fault; failing a horror check
Lvl +1	Learning of the death of a close companion
Lvl +2	Learning of the death of a loved one; failing a task of extreme importance

The dream seed's Intelligence score is then added to the base number. Intelligence measures, among other things, the dream seed's capacity to remember. The greater the capacity to remember, the tougher it is to put the event behind you.

Finally, the base number receives a modifier based upon the member of the Nightmare Court controlling the dreamscape. This modifier equals one-half of the Court member's Hit Dice, rounded down.

Putting it all together, if our 4th-level ranger fails to stop a creature and others are hurt because of it, the base number for achieving inner peace is 3 (4 – 1 = 3). Her Intelligence score is 16, increasing the inner peace number to 19 (16 + 3 = 19). Finally, since the Ghost Dancer is controlling the dreamscape where our ranger's dream-self is imprisoned, the modifier is 6 (12 ÷ 2 = 6). This results in an inner peace number of 25 (3 + 16 + 6 = 25). When the dream seed earns enough mental fortitude points to equal the inner peace number, then she can start breaking the binds that hold her in the dreamscape and thus defeat the dreamscape's overseer.

Until this level of mental fortitude is achieved, the overseer can't be permanently defeated. A dreamscape's overseer is usually an ennui, but sometimes it can even be a shadow morph or some other servant of the Nightmare Court. In rare instances, a Nightmare Court member personally serves as overseer.

While an overseer can be defeated in one dream scene, it returns at full strength in the next until the dream seed builds up enough mental fortitude to truly defeat it. Once this happens, damage inflicted on the overseer is real. To escape from the dreamscape for good, the dream seed needs to destroy the overseer or make it flee the dreamscape (which is what Court members usually do).

If the overseer is a member of the Court and the dream seed manages to destroy him, he regenerates through the powers of his mystic web connection. Though the dream seed escapes and won't be drawn back into the dreamscape because of this nightmare, the Court member will be ready to torment someone else once his wounds heal.

Example: The ranger defeats the obstacles thrown at her in her nightmares each night, slowly building her reserves of mental fortitude. Each time she defeats the overseer, it returns to torment her in the next nightmare (though it may wear a different form each time). Once her mental fortitude climbs past 25 and she achieves inner peace, she can destroy or otherwise banish the overseer from the dreamscape and break the chains keeping her dream-self in the Nightmare Lands. With this done, she wakes up with a sense of relief and able to put the trauma of the triggering event behind her. Her dream-self won't return to the Court's dreamscape when she falls back to sleep.

Experience in Dreamscapes

Characters earn experience points for the dreamscape events their dream-selves participate in. Experience earned in a dream scene is calculated at one-half the rate of experience in the waking world. For example, defeating the dream version of a werewolf earns a character 210 experience points instead of the usual 420 XPs.

Level 3 Reality: Waking World

This level of reality is what most people call "the real world." It is the waking world, the reality of every world on the Prime Material Plane. All campaign worlds consist of the third level of reality. In a level 3 world, all of the basic rules of the AD&D game and any special rules specific to that campaign world work as usual and are the norm.

Level 4 Reality: Hyper-Reality

Events that occur in the fourth level of reality are more real than events in the real world. This level of reality isn't common, but some claim that it can be found in special areas of some planes. This reality is called hyper-reality, for events here are more potent, more substantial than the most solid thing on any prime world.

In hyper-reality, everything has more vitality. Colors are brighter, scents are stronger, sounds are more intense, and emotions are more stirring. To reflect this, the rules for hyper-reality increase the intensity of effects that occur therein.

Combat in Hyper-Reality

A character in hyper-reality uses all the abilities and skills normally available in the waking world (level 3 reality). None of the rules governing attack rolls or spell-casting change. The results of attacks and spells, however, are more potent.

All damage rolls are doubled in hyper-reality. If a character normally inflicts 1d8+1 points of damage when he hits with his long sword, in hyper-reality he inflicts 2d8+2 points of damage. This applies to all characters, heroes and NPCs alike.

As far as spells and psionic powers are concerned, the following results of a successful use of a spell or power are doubled. *Spells:* range, duration, area of effect, and the effect itself. *Psionic powers:* range, area of effect, and the effect itself. Note that only those results that can be doubled are doubled; doubling a permanent duration or an unlimited range, for example, has no meaningful effect as two times unlimited is still unlimited.

Example: A 5th-level wizard casts a *fireball* spell in hyper-reality. The range of the spell doubles from 60 yards to 120 yards, the area of effect increases from a 20-foot radius to a 40-foot radius, and the damage inflicted doubles from 5d6 to 10d6. If the same wizard casts a *forget* spell, the range increase from 30 yards to 60 yards, the duration (permanent) remains the same, the area of effect increases from 1d4 creatures in a 20-foot cube to 2d4 creatures in a 40-foot cube, and the base amount of time forgotten increases from 1 minute to 2 minutes (2 rounds).

Like everything else in hyper-reality, movement occurs at a more rapid pace. Characters' movement rates are doubled while traveling through this level of reality.

Experience in Hyper-Reality
Characters who adventure in the fourth level of reality gain experience points, just as they do in the normal world (level 3). However, because of the potency of hyper-reality, all experiences are intensified. Experience points are calculated at double the rate of experience earned in the waking world. For example, defeating a hyper-reality werewolf earns a character 840 experience points instead of the usual 420 XP.

Level 5 Reality: Power Domains

The fifth level of reality is nothing more than a legend to most sages, and the vast majority of other people have no idea that anything exists beyond their own level of reality. Does level 5 reality exist? Is it, as some sages claim, the home of powers—beings who some call gods? The reality of such places is left to others to decide, and to the individual ideas of DMs everywhere. One warning: if a DM decides that the fifth level of reality exists, then it should remain beyond the reach or understanding of most mortal beings.

Dream Powers

Certain beings have learned to use dream reality to their own advantage, such as the members of the Nightmare Court. This manifests as *dream powers*. Additionally, the nature of a particular dream scene may make one or more dream powers temporarily available to a dreamer who would otherwise not have access to them.

The most common dream powers are described below. As anything can happen in a dream scene, this list of powers isn't exhaustive. Dream energy can be used to accomplish almost anything, provided a being knows how to harness it and shape it to his will. For this reason, other dream powers will appear as characters gain more experience in the dreamscapes.

All dream powers require the expenditure of mental fortitude points. When player characters gain access to dream powers, they must decide when the time is right to save their mental fortitude or spend it for the immediate use of a dream power (see page 26).

When the members of the Nightmare Court use dream powers, the mental fortitude that they spend is immediately added to the dream seed's mental fortitude rating. This is one way a dream seed gains mental fortitude points (see page 26).

Court members and their minions have unlimited amounts of mental fortitude, though the number of points they can spend in a specific dream scene is equal to their Hit Dice. So, the Ghost Dancer, who has 12 HD, can spend up to 12 mental fortitude points to use dream powers during the duration of a single dream scene.

Dream Powers	Mental Fortitude Cost
Alter Dreamscape	2+
Alter Perception	1+
Alter Spell	2+
Befuddlement	1
Control	2
Dream	2+
Ego Assault	1
Frustration	1+
Incompetence	1
Invulnerability	1+
Muddle	2
Nightmare	2+
Passage of Time	1+
Polymorph	2
Slow	1
Summon	1+

Using Dream Powers

Dream powers can be used in either of the first two levels of reality. However, as little that happens in a level 1 reality has a significant affect on the waking world, most of the rules presented below deal with using dream powers in dreamscapes (level 2 reality). In most cases, a dream power can only be activated by a dream seed (the dreamer who is central to the dreamscape in question) or by special dream beings like the members of the Nightmare Court. Either of these can activate a dream power for the mental fortitude point cost listed on page 30. (The "+" refers to additional point costs for increasing certain aspects of the power, such as the number of dreamers it affects, as detailed in the power descriptions that follow.)

Other dreamers present in a dreamscape or dream beings like ennui have a harder time affecting the dreamscapes of other dream seeds. For this reason, it costs these beings twice as much mental fortitude to activate a dream power.

Dreamers and dream beings can only activate dream powers they have access to. When a dreamer (a player character dream-self) uses a dream power, the cost is subtracted from the dream-self's mental fortitude rating. When a member of the Nightmare Court or some other dream being uses a dream power to affect a dreamscape, the dream seed powering that dreamscape adds the spent points to his own mental fortitude rating.

Whenever a dream power is activated, it affects the entire dreamscape. Some powers can be selectively employed against a specific portion of the dreamscape or a specific

dreamer, as detailed in the power's description.

Activating a dream power is as simple as thinking about it and spending the mental fortitude points. Multiple powers may be active at any given time, and the effects of all active powers are cumulative.

Limitations of Dream Powers

Dream powers are subject to certain limitations. These limitations are detailed below.

Dream powers can only be used by dreamers, powers (beings who some call gods), the members of the Nightmare Court and other beings like them who have a connection to the dream plane, and by designated agents of the Nightmare Court. These designated agents must either be night terrors or dream spawn.

Dream powers can only be used to affect dreamers or a dreamscape. They have no direct impact on dream spawn, wanderers, or other beings with a connection to the dream plane. However, if a dreamscape has been slowed, all occupants of the dreamscape experience the slow effects, including dream spawn and wanderers.

Dreamers can only use dream powers if they have somehow gained access to them. How dreamers gain access to dream powers is described in the next section.

Gaining Dream Powers

There are two primary ways for dreamers to gain dream powers. Dream powers can be granted or learned. Both of these methods are described below

The most common way for a dreamer to be granted access to a dream power is by the nature of the dreamscape being visited. Every dreamscape has an identifying power that defines the nature of the dreams that can take place within it. In some cases, a dreamscape can have more than one power associated with it, or it can have no powers at all. All dreamers within a dreamscape have access to the dream power associated with it, though they might not be aware of it or even able to consciously access the power (or powers).

For example, if a dreamscape has a natural invulnerability power associated with it, that power automatically takes effect when necessary. A dreamer reduced to less than half of his total hit points makes a saving throw vs. paralyzation to ignore the damage and continue to the next dream scene. (The DM might want to make the roll in secret for the player to keep the nature of the dreamscape a mystery.) If the power succeeds, the cost is subtracted from the dreamer's mental fortitude rating.

The second way to gain dream powers is much harder, but also more precise. It requires learning how to manipulate dream reality, which takes time and multiple experiences in the dream plane. No character can begin learning the secrets of dream powers until he or she reaches a certain level of experience. This level is different for each character class. The table below shows the earliest level of experience a character can start such training.

Character Class	Earliest Level
Warrior	9th
Wizard	7th
Illusionist	6th
Priest	5th
Rogue	9th
Bard	7th
Psionicist	4th

Only a character who learns the nature of the dream plane or at least suspects that dreams have their own reality can begin to learn how to control dream power. A character must experience a dreamscape scene and

come to understand it as an actual, albeit unusual, event. This is best accomplished by discussing the experience with someone already knowledgeable about the dream plane (such as a psychological doctor like Gregorian Illhousen or a dreamwalker like the Abber shaman Walks Alone).

To learn a dream power, a character must expend 1,000 experience points times his current experience level to represent the time spent studying the powers available in dreams. This can be reduced to 500 XP times the character's current experience level if the training is guided by a dreamwalker. Then the character must visit the dream plane and attempt to use the power in question. This requires an Intelligence check made with a –4 penalty. (If assisted by a dreamwalker, the penalty is reduced to –2.) If the check succeeds, the character learns that particular dream power, which can thereafter be used by his dream-self while in dreamscapes. If the check fails, no dream power is learned and no other attempts can be made at that level of experience. In either case, the experience points are lost.

These points are lost from the character's pool of XP that are being saved to increase the character's level. The character doesn't lose points from any levels he has already gained. However, unless the character has enough XP saved to pay for the dream-power training, he can't make the learning attempt.

Only one dream power can be learned per level of experience. So, if a character learns the invulnerability power at 5th level, he can't learn a new dream power until he reaches 6th level and then has enough XP saved to pay for the cost of training.

A character can never learn more dream powers than a number equal to one-quarter of his Intelligence score, rounded down. So, a character with an Intelligence score of 13 can learn up to 3 dream powers over time.

Dream Power Descriptions

The dream powers described below include details of how each power works, its cost in mental fortitude points, and an example of its use by a dreamer and by the Nightmare Court. If DMs or players wish to create new dream powers, use the ones listed here as a basis upon which to build them.

Alter Dreamscape (Cost: 2+)

Every dreamscape occupied by a dream seed has a particular scene occurring within its confines for as long as the seed continues to dream. If the seed, a visitor, or another outside force wishes to alter the scene in some way, this power must be used.

Subtly altering a dream scene requires the expenditure of 2 mental fortitude points. This includes changing the location from the current one to another in the same venue (moving from one room in the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed to another), or replacing silver utensils at a dinner table with wiggling worms.

Making more drastic alterations costs more mental fortitude. Changing conditions in the same location costs 3 points (summer in Nova Vaasa becomes winter, day becomes night). Changing mundane conditions to fantastic ones, or vice versa, costs 4 points (Nova Vaasa becomes a place of giant proportions). Finally, turning the scene into something completely alien to the dream seed requires the expenditure of 5 mental fortitude points.

Whenever a scene is altered to something alien, all dreamers automatically receive the abilities they need to function there. Dreamers in an underwater dreamscape, for example, will be able to breathe water, and those in the void of space will find plenty of air available.

When a dream scene undergoes a drastic change, all dreamers are required to make a fear check.

Example: Beryl the Mage and Thorin the Warrior find themselves in a dreamscape that suddenly changes from the streets of Nova Vaasa to the Elemental Plane of Fire. They exist in this new environment as though it was their natural habitat. However, because they believe the fire can hurt them, they need to make a successful fear check to hold down the numbing terror that might otherwise engulf them.

Alter Perception (Cost: 1+)

This power has two uses. When employed by beings like the members of the Nightmare Court, it tricks a dreamer's senses, sowing confusion and disharmony among those in the dream scene. It alters what one dream-self perceives, making it different from the actual play of events. This could be as simple as making a dreamer see another's water skin as a bottle of poison, or something far more elaborate. The power used in this way affects the dreamer in as many different ways as the user requires and lasts for an entire scene. Other dreamers in the dream scene can be affected, but the cost is 1 mental fortitude point for each additional dreamer.

When used by a dreamer, it negates the effects of the power as employed by some other agent. If a member of the Nightmare Court uses this power to alter a dreamer's perceptions, the dreamer can see the dream scene as it really is by activating this power himself. When used as a defense, it must be activated by each dream-self separately at a cost of 2 mental fortitude points.

Example: Beryl leads Thorin down a narrow alley and is stabbed in the back by a dream spawn. When he turns to defend himself, he sees Thorin's blade dripping with blood and an evil smile crosses Thorin's face. In truth, Thorin is as surprised as the wounded mage, but Beryl is suffering from the effects of the alter perception power.

DMs and Dream Powers

Because of the surreal nature of dreams and the strange way things work in dreamscapes, the results of dream powers are often left to DM interpretation. When in doubt about how a specific power will affect a specific scene, judge in favor of the weird and unexpected. In dreams, once the powers of the reality are called upon, literally *anything* can happen. It falls to DMs to define "anything" from scene to scene.

Alter Spell (Cost: 2+)

In general, spells, psionics, and magical items work normally in the dreamscapes. By using the alter spell power, this can be changed.

When the user wants to alter spells, he picks an entire level of spells and pays an amount of mental fortitude points equal to two times the level specified. Once the cost is paid, all spells of that level are altered until the dream scene ends. Wizard spells and priest spells must be paid for separately.

Example: Morpheus wants to use the alter spell power in a dream scene. He picks 3rd-level wizard spells and spends 6 mental fortitude points ($3 \times 2 = 6$). Until the scene ends, all 3rd-level wizard spells are altered.

Psionic powers can be altered for a cost of 4 points per discipline affected.

Example: Hypnos decides that for this dream scene, all clairsentience psionic powers will be altered; he pays 4 mental fortitude points.

Magical items, which usually have stronger ties to a dreamer's persona, must be targeted individually. The cost is 5 points per item.

The dreamer or being decides at the moment the points are spent whether the alteration will be *nightmare* or *dream*. A *nightmare* alteration causes spells or magical items to operate at half their normal

effectiveness. So, magical weapons inflict half their normal amount of damage, and spells become half as effective.

A *dream* alteration doubles the effectiveness of a spell, psionic power, or magical item for the duration of the dream scene. So, spell ranges, durations, and effects are doubled, and magical weapons inflict double their normal amount of damage.

Example: Beryl casts a *magic missile* spell in a dream scene where nightmare alterations have been imposed on 1st-level spells. The range is cut in half, dropping to 30 yards plus 5 yards per level of the caster; the number of missiles created falls to 2 (5 ÷ 2, rounded down); and the damage each missile inflicts drops to 1d2+1. Meanwhile, Thorin has used a dream alteration to improve his *long sword +1*. Now, instead of inflicting 1d8+1 points of damage, it inflicts 2d8+2.

Befuddlement (Cost: 1)

Befuddlement is used moments before a dreamer awakens. It causes him to forget his most recent visit to the dream plane. If a saving throw vs. spell is failed, the dreamer doesn't remember having a dream or nightmare. If the save is made, the dreamer remembers fleeting images and can even recall some details.

This power is usually employed to cancel the beneficial effects of a vivid dream or the penalties of a vivid nightmare. If a dreamer can't remember the good or bad feelings, he or she can't gain bonuses or suffer penalties (see the rules concerning vivid dreams and nightmares in level 1 reality, page 14). This power is also used by the Nightmare Court against those who deliberately enter dreamscapes in an attempt to gain information from a dream seed or offer help in some way.

It can also be used in wondrously uplifting dreams and extremely terrifying nightmares (see page 16).

Example: Thorin dreams that a terrible black dragon made of shadow kills Beryl. He knows that upon waking, the emotions spawned by this nightmare could affect his waking self. To keep that from happening, he uses this power to forget the nightmare. If he makes the save described above, he recalls enough of the nightmare to be affected by the rules for vivid nightmares in level 1 reality.

On the other hand, Beryl has gone into Thorin's dreamscape in an effort to help him break free from the Nightmare Court. To keep Beryl from remembering the things he learned in Thorin's dreams, the Nightmare Court uses this power. Beryl must make the save to retain at least some of her memories as he crosses the Veil of Sleep.

Control (Cost: 2)

A dreamer can never be forced to do something that goes against his beliefs and view of the world. However, he may be coerced into certain innocuous behavior through the use of the dream power called control.

This *charm*-like ability can be used to push a dreamer or group of dreamers into performing simple actions that aren't obviously harmful or directly against a dreamer's personal ethics. For a cost of 2 mental fortitude points, a dreamer can use the power on another dreamer or a dream-being, like a member of the Nightmare Court. A Court member can use it on a dream seed. A dreamer can avoid the effects of the power once it has been activated by making a successful saving throw vs. spell. If the save fails, the dreamer can be made to perform a series of simple actions for 1d4 rounds.

The most common use for the control power is to introduce a dreamer into a situation. Perhaps the focus of a dream is a haunted house. A dreamer may decide he'll just sit in the front yard and never enter the creepy place. Using this power, the dreamer can be forced to go inside through a series of simple commands.

The control power may also be used to form an attitude within a dreamer's mind. A control-induced series of thoughts could make a dreamer detest the people of a village, for example.

Example: In a dream scene, Thorin finds himself standing bound and gagged on the end of a plank. A band of pirates point to the waves far below and motion for him to jump. Thorin would rather fight to the death than leap into the black sea. Suddenly, the control power is activated and Thorin receives a series of simple commands. "Turn, walk forward," the unheard voice whispers, sapping his will. He fails his saving throw. Thorin turns and walks off the end of the plank, plunging into the water and gazing in awe at a submerged city.

Beryl, however, also possesses this dream power. Just before Thorin steps off the plank, he uses it to turn his friend from the innocent yet destructive course. Unfortunately, Thorin makes this saving throw and must continue to perform the first series of controlled actions.

Dream (Cost: 2+)

This dream power gives a dreamer the ability to alter a dream scene and change it into a vivid or wondrously uplifting dream. In normal dream scenes, the cost for using this power is 2 mental fortitude points for a dream seed and 2+ for a dreamer visiting the dreamscape. For the dreamer, the cost is modified by his relationship to the dream seed: best friends or close relatives, +1; friends or relatives, +2; acquaintances, +3; strangers, +4; rivals or enemies, +5.

In dream scenes originating in the Nightmare Lands, the costs for turning a nightmare into a vivid dream are even greater. The dream seed

has a base cost of 2, modified by one-half the Hit Dice total of the dreamscape's overseer. Dreamers use the same modifiers as listed above, plus one-half the Hit Dice total of the overseer. For example, if an ennui was overseeing a dreamscape the modifier would be +4 (8 HD ÷ 2 – 4), while the modifier for a dreamscape under the direct control of the Nightmare Man would be +7 (14 HD ÷ 2 = 7).

Example: Thorin is caught in a particularly terrible nightmare of the Nightmare Court's devising. Beryl decides to try to help by altering the nightmare into a vivid dream. The base cost for Beryl (a visiting dreamer) is 2. The following modifiers are also applied: +1 for being one of Thorin's best friends and +6 because the nightmare is being orchestrated directly by the Ghost Dancer (12 HD ÷2 = 6). This means that the use of this power will cost Beryl 9 mental fortitude points—a hefty sum, even considering the terrible circumstances.

Ego Assault (Cost: 1)

Ego assault works best against dream seeds. It takes a pre-existing negative emotion, such as guilt, frustration, or grief, and intensifies it a hundred fold. These pre-existing negative emotions are always tied to the dream seed's triggering event.

An ego assault forces the dream seed within a dreamscape to make a saving throw vs. spell. If the dream seed succeeds, he feels the anguish of his passion but is able to deal with it. If he fails, he suffers the effects of severe depression for the duration of the scene and for the next 1d2 days in the waking world. See page 20 for the effects of severe depression.

Ego assault only intensifies pre-existing emotions (the triggering events) of dream seeds. However, the power is such that it causes the negative emotions to influence the entire dreamscape. Other dreamers in a dreamscape when the ego assault power is used also experience the negative emotions, but without the personal ties of the triggering event they have an easier time shrugging off the effects. Dreamers other than the dream seed add +4 to their saving throws to avoid the power's effects.

The cost of using this dream power is 1 mental fortitude point.

Example: Thorin dreams once again of his failure against the harpies. The ego assault power magnifies his feelings of inadequacy a hundred fold, and his failed save indicates that a severe depression will engulf him for the next few days—even in the waking world. Dr. Illhousen is present in the dream, trying to treat his patient through unorthodox means. The ego assault washes over Illhousen as well as Thorin, but the doctor makes his saving throw. He feels Thorin's loss and sympathizes, but he is able to deal with the failure and overcome the engulfing depression.

Frustration (Cost: 1+)

This power causes dreamers to feel helpless in stressful situations, including combat. Whenever in a threatening or hostile situation, a dreamer affected by this power suffers a 25% penalty to all rolls and moves as if under a *slow* spell. For attack rolls and proficiency checks, this equates to a –5 modifier. Percentage based skills receive a flat 25% penalty. Damage rolls are also decreased by 25%, rounded down; an attack that inflicts 9 points of damage causes only 7 points when this power is in effect.

The frustration power lasts until the end of a dream scene.

Multiple uses of the frustration power are not cumulative, so using the power on the same target more than once in a scene has no additional effect. The cost is 1 mental fortitude point for every dreamer in the dreamscape.

Example: Shevern, a rogue who prides herself on being able to climb sheer walls, is trapped against a cliff by a pack of hungry wolves. The

frustration power has been applied to the dreamscape. She turns and attempts to scale the rocky surface, but every hand-hold crumbles beneath her touch as her skill rolls receive a –25% penalty. The wolves rush her exposed back while she scrambles futilely at the treacherous rock wall. She pulls her short sword, but she finds it does little good against the wolves, as her attack rolls receive a –5 penalty and any damage she inflicts is reduced by 25%.

Incompetence (Cost: 1)

This power can confuse and stymie those it is directed against. When activated against a dreamer, the dream-self's highest ability score switches places with his lowest ability score for the duration of the dream scene. Bonus and penalty modifiers must be calculated from the switched scores. A dream-self can make a saving throw vs. petrification to overcome the power's effects, but if the save fails the switch remains in affect until the scene ends. The cost is 1 mental fortitude point. To affect multiple dreamers, the power must be used multiple times.

When a dreamer uses this power on himself or a friend, it is called *competence*. It can be used to switch ability scores back to normal or to give a dreamer a second chance. The second chance can only be used once in a dream scene; it allows the dreamer to roll again after failing an important roll. The second roll counts, whether it succeeds or fails.

Example: Thorin stands before the barbarian king. "You are a great warrior?" the king asks. Thorin nods his head. "Then best my champion," the king says as he points to a giant barbarian. The incompetence power is used, and Thorin feels his Strength wane as his Charisma rises.

Invulnerability (Cost: 1+)

Through the use of this dream power, a dream-self can survive incredible trauma or damage inflicted in a dream scene. Falling off a cliff or being consumed by a giant monster will only transfer a dream-self into another scene instead of harming him. Further, mental weakness and death checks aren't required while this power is in affect. Additionally, the dreamer doesn't automatically awaken when his dream-self suffers massive damage; he simply transfers into another dream scene.

This power has a mental fortitude cost of 1 point for each major scene the user wants it to last through. For game purposes, a dreamer can participate in up to 8 major dream scenes in a single eight-hour period of sleep, though many more minor scenes may unfold. So, the cost can be as high as 8 points. The power affects all dreamers within the dreamscape.

While this power is in affect, whenever a dream-self is reduced to half his starting hit points or lower, he makes a saving throw vs. paralyzation. If the saving throw is successful, the dreamer realizes the nature of this dreamscape and manages to ignore the damage. The dream self's hit points are reset to their full amount and the dream scene changes. All other dreamers in the dreamscape immediately shift into the new scene.

If the saving throw fails, the dream-self takes damage as normal and immediately wakes up. Check for mental weakness or death, depending on the amount of damage sustained. Other dreamers continue on with the dream scenes without their companion, unless the waking dream-self is the dream seed. If it is the dream-seed, all dreamers are expelled from the dreamscape and wake up.

Dreamers use this power to protect themselves from the dangers of the second level of reality. The Nightmare Court uses it to keep its "guests" safe through a long night of terror inducing nightmares.

Example: Shevern is in a dreamscape where the invulnerability power is in affect. The Nightmare Court wants her to provide lots of terror for their nocturnal feeding, and they have

planned five scenes for just such an occasion. The cost is 5 mental fortitude points, which are added to Shevern's mental fortitude rating. In the first scene, a gargoyle smashes its claws into her, reducing her to less than half her hit point total. She screams in pain, but her successful saving throw vs. paralyzation immediately erases the damage and transfers her into another scene. This time, the trap she tries to disarm explodes, instantly killing her. She fails the saving throw and wakes up immediately. She must now make a successful Wisdom check, mental weakness check, and madness check to determine the fate of her waking body (see page 18).

Muddle (Cost: 2)

This power muddles the line between dreams and reality. Whenever it is used, dreamers "fall asleep" in the dream scene and wake up in the waking world without realizing a transition has taken place. The dreamer should not realize he dreamed whatever scene just occurred. The cost for using this power is 2 mental fortitude points, and it affects every dreamer in a dreamscape.

Example: Dr. Illhousen dreams that he is lying in bed when he is attacked by a creature that resembles his dead nurse, Mandalain. He manages to drive the creature away, then returns to bed to sob himself to sleep. When he awakens in his real bed, he has no idea that the previous night's events were anything but real.

Nightmare (Cost: 2+)

This dream power gives a dreamer the ability to alter a dream scene and change it into a vivid or extremely terrifying nightmare. In normal dream scenes, the cost for using this power is 2 mental fortitude points for a dream seed and 2+ for a dreamer visiting the dreamscape. For the dreamer, the cost is modified by his relationship to the dream seed: best friends or close relatives, +1; friends or relatives, +2; acquaintances, +3; strangers, +4; rivals or enemies, +5.

In dream scenes originating in the Nightmare Lands, the costs for turning a nightmare into a vivid or extremely terrifying nightmare are less. The dream seed has a base cost of 2, modified by one-quarter the Hit Dice total of the dreamscape's overseer. Dreamers use the same modifiers as listed above, plus one-quarter the Hit Dice total of the overseer. For example, if an ennui was overseeing a dreamscape the modifier would be +2 (8 HD ÷ 4 = 2), while the modifier for a dreamscape under the direct control of the Ghost Dancer would be +3 (12 HD ÷ 4 = 3).

Example: The Nightmare Man wants to turn Dr. Illhousen's nightmare of Mandalain into a vivid nightmare that will affect him in the waking world. The cost for the use of this power is 7 (as Dr. Illhousen is the Nightmare Man's enemy), which is added to Illhousen's mental fortitude rating.

Passage of Time (Cost: 1+)

Hours, days, months, or even years can pass over the course of a dream scene. A dreamer might dream of being imprisoned for nearly a decade before the real trials of the dreamscape begin. Both dreamers and the members of the Nightmare Court can use this power to speed up or slow down apparent time in a dream scene. The power affects the entire dreamscape, and the cost is 1 point per dreamer in the scene.

Dreamers use this power to slow time down to better examine the parts of a dream scene or to make a particularly joyful moment last longer. They also use the power to make time move faster, thus hurrying through a grueling scene or rushing to get to another point in time. It can also be used to combat the power's use by others, though in this case the user who first activated the power gets a saving throw vs. rod

to keep his effect active.

Whenever a member of the Nightmare Court exercises this power, dreamers receive a brief summary of what happens in the interim, but every moment of time doesn't have to be played out. This summary can be as simple as "several days pass," or as complicated as a full story. Whatever happens in this interim, only a few seconds pass in the waking world. Unless a dreamer uses the power himself to stop time in the interim, the dreamer can have no affect on events that take place as time passes.

Example: In a dream scene, Dr. Illhousen is arrested by the town constable for the murder of his nurse, Mandalain. He is innocent, but he can't prove it. In the dream, he languishes in the town lock-up for several weeks before the day of his trial finally arrives thanks to the passage of time power (used by a member of the Nightmare Court).

Polymorph (Cost: 1)

While the alter dreamscape power is used to change the trappings of a dream scene, the polymorph power is used to alter dream-selves, mundane weapons, and other common items (magical weapons and magical items require the use of the alter spell power) into different shapes and forms. Any shape that can be imagined can be formed. Dreamers use it to benefit themselves in some way, while the members of the Nightmare Court use it to further instill fear and terror in their victims. Dreamers may alter themselves to have wings so they can fly, while the Nightmare Court may alter a dreamer into a zombie, or a child, or a hapless mouse about to be consumed by a hungry cat.

This power doesn't change a dream-self's ability scores or hit points. His Armor Class and any possessions carried are all transformed, however. Other senses and abilities may or may not be bestowed upon the dreamer, depending on the desires of the power's activator. Fish might talk, a zombie might bleed, or a one-inch version of a dreamer may find he can no longer speak to attract the attention of those who might inadvertently step on him.

Example: Beryl, Shevern, and Thorin are polymorphed into goblins in a dream scene. They are being hunted by a band of heroes. The trio tries to plead their case to the heroes, screaming for mercy as the warriors cut them down. When Beryl awakens, he remembers burning a goblin lair years ago. The screams of the pitiful things trapped inside still haunt him, and obviously provided the raw material for this dream scene.

Slow (Cost: 1)

This power is very similar to the 3rd-level wizard's spell of the same name. When used, all dreamers in a dreamscape receive an Armor Class penalty of +4, an attack roll penalty of –4, all Dexterity score bonuses are negated, and movement rates are cut in half.

Though the slow power can be combined with the frustration power, the attack penalty is *not* cumulative (the attack roll modifier can't go below –4 due to the use of these two powers). All other effects are cumulative, however.

Multiple uses of the slow power are not cumulative; additional applications of the slow power have no additional effect. The cost is 1 mental fortitude point to affect an entire dreamscape. Slow might take the form of simply causing everything to move at a slower rate, or it could cause things around a dreamer to speed up.

Example: A horrible bog-troll is chasing Beryl through the moors, but he can't seem to run fast enough. His feet feel as if they're made of lead and they stick in the muddy ground with every step. The troll soon overtakes him and sinks its claws into his back. He turns to fight, but he knows he'll never reach his spell components before the creature strikes a killing blow.

Summon (Cost: 1+)

Sleeping characters in the waking world may be pulled into a dreamscape through the unconscious wishes of their companions. They may also be summoned into another's dreamscape via the powers of the Nightmare Court. The members of the Court often bring multiple mortals into their realm since the extra mental torment provides them with even more energy. Only when a companion proves particularly troublesome on multiple occasions will a Court member not intentionally drag him along into a dreamscape.

A dreamer can use this power to summon sleeping companions at a cost of 1 mental fortitude point per dream-self. Two things must happen for the power to succeed: the companions must be sleeping and not already in another dreamscape; and the summoned dreamer must accept the invitation. If the summoned dreamer wants to answer the summons, no saving throw is necessary. If he doesn't want to answer it, he gets a saving throw vs. spell. If the save succeeds, he can ignore the summons. If the save fails, his dream-self is drawn to the dreamscape of the summoner. Only dream seeds can use this power in this manner.

The Nightmare Court can use this power to bring other dreamers into a dreamscape. The dreamers don't have to know the dream seed, but they do have to be sleeping, and they do get to make a saving throw vs. spell to resist the summons. The dream seed gains 1 mental fortitude point for every dreamer pulled into a dreamscape by the Court with this power.

Example: Eydie and Grumaldi are exhausted from a long night of wine and dancing, and they retire to their own beds. Moments after their heads hit the pillows, they find themselves alongside Beryl in a dreamscape, summoned there by the witch, Mullonga.

Dreamwalking

Dreamwalking is a special ability that isn't widespread. Only a select few in all the worlds have the skills and knowledge necessary to walk in the dreams of others. While this ability is similar to the psionic power, dream travel, and the wizard spell, *dream*, it has different applications. Dreamwalking is practiced by the Abber shamans, the Nightmare Court, and various spiritual and enlightened beings throughout the multiverse.

Dreamwalking is a character's ability to enter a deep trance, call his dream-self into being, and project it into the dreams of others. Abber shamans use dreamwalking to visit the dreams of people sleeping in the waking world. The members of the Nightmare Court use the ability to search the dream plane for dark dreams to feed their supernatural hunger. If player characters learn the skill, they can follow a dreaming companion into a dreamscape.

To successfully use dreamwalking, a character must make a Wisdom check with a –4 penalty to enter a trance and project his dream-self. If the dreamwalker is in close proximity to the dreamer he wishes to follow (in the same room, for example), the path to the same portion of the dream plane is easy to navigate. If the dreamwalker knows the dreamer but isn't in close proximity, another Wisdom –4 check is required to locate the dreamer in the dream plane. If the dreamer has been taken to the Nightmare Lands, then an additional Wisdom –4 check is needed to follow the mystic web to that terrible shore.

Dreamwalking can be attempted once per day. The trance lasts for 1 turn per level of the dreamwalker. While in this type of trance, the dreamwalker's body lies helpless and vulnerable. Care should be taken before entering the dreamwalking state to make sure the character's body is protected so that the dream-self has somewhere to return to. If the

body dies while the dream-self is dreamwalking, the dream-self becomes trapped in the dream plane. Once the dreamscape the dreamwalker is visiting fades away, so does the dream-self. If the dreamwalker is in one of the permanent dreamscapes of the Nightmare Lands, he becomes a dream-ghost tied to that particular dreamscape unless a member of the Nightmare Court decides to remove him.

Dreamwalking is basically a character's ability to control his own dream-self and direct its course through the dream plane. All other characters are subject to the whims of their subconscious, the uncertain tides of the dream plane, and sometimes even the machinations of the Nightmare Court or other dream beings when their dream-selves go on their nightly excursions.

Learning Dreamwalking

Usually, only priests, psionicists, or some other professionals (such as Dr. Illhousen) seek the ability to control their dream-selves. However, anyone with access to either a teacher or unusual dream related experiences can seek to learn this skill.

With a teacher, priests or psionicists must be at least 3rd level. With only their own experiences to guide them, priest and psionicist characters can't begin learning until at least 5th level.

All other character classes must be 5th level if they have a teacher, or 7th level if they don't. Nonclassed characters, such as a doctor at the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed, needs a Wisdom score of at least 15 to learn the skill of dreamwalking.

Once per level (or once every six months for nonclassed characters), a character can attempt to use his training or dream experiences to learn to dreamwalk. This requires making the Wisdom -4 check. If the character succeeds, he has gained the dreamwalking ability. If the check fails, he can't try to learn to dreamwalk until he reaches the next level of experience (or six months have passed, in the case of nonclassed characters).

It should be noted that Abber shamans automatically gain the dreamwalking ability at 9th level. Their closeness to dream reality and their quest for knowledge gains them the skill, but their lack of experience with their own dreams makes them wait until 9th level.

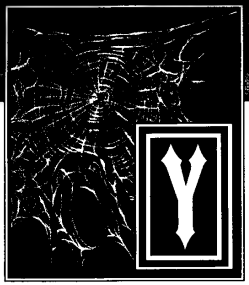
Adventures in Dreamscapes

Adventures in dreamscapes are built around the dream seeds who give the spheres their power. Everything that occurs should be in some way related to the triggering event that plagues the dream seed or other events drudged from his subconscious. Of course, these events can be twisted as to be almost unrecognizable, though some clues regarding the memories they were drawn from should surface as the adventure goes on.

Over the course of a night, a dream seed can participate in as many as 8 separate *major dream scenes*. A major dream scene lasts as long as a single encounter, though the perceived time can be a few minutes to many years due to the nature of the scene. The number of *minor dream scenes* a dream seed can participate in is nearly unlimited, but no minor scene lasts more than a few seconds.

A scene is defined as a specific situation, in a specific setting, with a specific cast of characters. A scene ends when these elements change. The scenes that play out over a single evening don't have to be tied together in any immediately noticeable way, though at least a few of them can be.

A dream seed can move from an undersea scene to a familiar scene to a battle scene, and the only thing they have in common is the dream seed and a tone of guilt, for example.



CHAPTER III: THE NIGHTMARE LANDS

"You call my home insane, my realm, my kingdom? If my land is insane, then think on this. It is your dreams that give it shape and make it so. What does that say about you?"

—The Nightmare Man

The Nightmare Lands is an island of terror in the Demiplane of Dread. It consists of varying amounts of the first three levels of reality. Fleeting dreams blow across the domain on ever-shifting winds. Great and small dreamscapes circle the island, letting level 2 reality seep into the land. Both of these realities interact with the permanent expanse of level 3 reality that comprises the bulk of the island. This gives the Nightmare Lands two distinct states of reality: that which exists inside the permanent ring of dreamscape bubbles (level 2 reality) and the rest of the island where the mix of three realities make for a place of madness and constant change. This area of combined reality is called "the Terrain Between."

The Terrain Between

The Terrain Between exists between the waking world and the Veil of Sleep, affected both by the strange properties of the Demiplane of Dread and the domain's special connection to the dream plane. The Terrain Between consists of a number of different areas: the rocky shoals, the Outlands, the Ring of Dreams, the Forest of Everchange, and the city of Nod. Each area is described below.

As this domain is a mixture of the waking world and the substance of dreams, nothing is as it appears and everything shifts appearance from one moment to the next. While this is true of the domain in general, each of the defined areas remain more or less the same. Elements of these areas can and do change with alarming frequency, but each distinct area always maintains its separation from the others.

The Rocky Shoals

As an island, the Nightmare Lands is surrounded by frigid water. This rough expanse of water is called the Nocturnal Sea. It appears to stretch forever in all directions, but the walls of mist that press in upon the island cut off visibility much past the rocky shores.

Shoals lie beneath the waves, jagged rocks that remain hidden until a ship approaches. Then they jut out of the water to stab at the ship's hull. In addition, the rocks change position occasionally, making it impossible to chart a totally safe course to the island.

A ship that sails toward the Nightmare Lands finds itself caught in a deadly current that carries it toward the toothlike shoals. The ship captain must make a sailing proficiency check with a –6 penalty to keep the ship from striking any rocks. The DM determines the number of checks needed to make it to the shore. This number should range from 3 (in a relatively calm sea) to 8 (in a terrible storm). If any check fails, the ship strikes a jutting rock (or, perhaps, the rock moves to strike the ship). A ship that crashes into a rocky shoal will sink or otherwise become completely unseaworthy in a number of turns (or rounds for small boats) equal to the captain's Intelligence score. In the interim, those crew members who haven't abandoned ship before the turns run out suffer 4d6 points of damage every turn (or round for small boats) as splintering timbers, falling masts, and the jagged rocks crush and throw

them around. Any sailors who die on the ship become zombies who use the remains of the vessel as a lair; those who die in the water become zombies who must seek lairs.

Ships that have been dashed to pieces on the rocky shoals can still be seen among the crashing waves. The wrecks roll around the rocks, providing shelter for the undead creatures who were once the crews of these sinking ships. The sailors become sea zombies, as described in the *Monstrous Manual*™ book.

Other creatures found in the coastal waters include sharks, marine scrags (saltwater trolls), and various nightmare creatures that inhabit water and mist.

The weather can go from bad to worse in a moment upon the Nocturnal Sea. The wall of mist extends into the sky so that the sun never shines upon the churning sea. Days are short periods of gray. Nights are long stretches of starless darkness, occasionally illuminated by a jagged flash of lightning. To determine the weather when a ship first enters the waters around the island, roll 1d10. Every turn thereafter, roll 1d6 to determine if the weather changes. On a roll of 1 or 2, the weather does change. Roll another 1d10 to determine the new condition.

1d10 Roll	Weather Condition
1	Becalmed
2–3	Strong winds
4–7	Storm
8–9	Gale
10	Hurricane*

* Can only follow a gale; otherwise, treat as gale result.

The Outlands

The waves of the Nocturnal Sea crash upon a rise of gray, lifeless earth and exposed, jagged stone. This broken area reaches from the shore to the Ring of Dreams. It consists of stark, bare ground, rocky canyons, and jutting cliffs. Nothing grows in this region, and no rain falls upon its dry, cracked surface.

The sky above the Outlands is as gray as the expanse above the Nocturnal Sea. Gray days give way to nights of deepest black. The wind off the sea dies as it passes over the broken ground, leaving the vast majority of the area calm and quiet. Though it never rains, thunder constantly rumbles through these badlands, and occasionally lightning strikes from out of the sky to carve a new furrow in the stark soil.

Few living creatures inhabit the Outlands, as there is little in the way of nourishment to sustain them. There are dream spawn and a few night terrors roaming this desolate region, however. Rogue ennui are among the most prominent, but all forms of lesser and greater dream spawn can be encountered here.

The most telling feature of this region is that it doesn't experience the chaotic changes that the rest of the land is subject to. Illusions and dream scenes can appear amid the canyons or play out above the plains of barren rock, but these are easily recognized for what they are as the terrain itself remains unaffected.

The Ring of Dreams

From the shores of the Nightmare Lands, a person could look inland and see the Ring of Dreams. From a distance, it first appears as a band of lightning-filled clouds above the far horizon. Moving closer, the elements of the ring take on definite shape. Hanging in the sky, floating just above the surface of the ground, are thousands of glistening spheres. These are the permanent dreamscapes controlled by the Nightmare Court, placed like ornaments in a ring around the Forest of Everchange.

The ground beneath the spheres constantly reacts to the dream reality that seeps out of the dreamscapes. Unlike the barren rock that marks the Outlands, the ground beneath the Ring of Dreams is lush and vibrant grassland.

However, this ground is in a constant state of flux due to the contamination from level 2 reality.

Grass that is a healthy green one moment can change to any color of the rainbow in the next. This band of grassland that separates the Outlands from the Forest of Everchange sometimes takes on other forms, each as strange and wondrous and frightening as any dream or nightmare occurring within the dreamscapes. These changes are temporal, constantly shifting the grassland through an unending series of permutations.

The spheres themselves come in a variety of sizes. They range from small spheres only a few feet across to giant globes about 300 feet in diameter. They float in place above the ground, hanging motionless in the gray sky. The bottom curve of the lowest-hanging sphere floats one foot above the ground, while the top curve of the highest hung sphere rises some 500 feet over the grassland.

Empty dream spheres have a stagnant appearance, while the colors of those in which a dream scene plays out dance across their glistening surfaces. It is easy to pass beneath the arcs of adjacent spheres and enter the Forest of Everchange. If a traveler touches or even gazes too intently at a dream sphere, however, he can find himself being pulled into the dreamscape.

If a character stands within 10 feet of a dream sphere and looks into its surface, one of two things can happen: nothing at all, or the character may be drawn into the dreamscape contained within the sphere. First, the DM must determine if the dream sphere is active or inactive. To make this determination, either choose the best course for the adventure or roll 1d6 and check the table below.

1d6 Roll	Nature of Dream Sphere
1–4	Active
5–6	Inactive

An *active dream sphere* is one that is occupied by a dream seed. The outer surface of an active sphere swirls with vibrant colors and shifting mists to indicate that dream scenes are taking place within the dreamscape. Sometimes, if a character looks deeply enough into the storm of mists and colors, he can glimpse fleeting images of the dream scenes in the glistening surface.

An *inactive dream sphere* doesn't currently serve as a prison for a dream seed. No dream scenes spin within this pocket dimension, as no dreamer is present to provide the necessary energy. The surface of an inactive dream sphere has less vibrant colors, less energetic swirls of mist. No storms play across these calm surfaces. Instead, the surfaces are tranquil and almost reflective. Indeed, if a character looks into the surface of an inactive sphere, he sometimes sees images drawn from his own dreams.

When a character gazes into the turbulent depths of an active dream sphere, he must make a save vs. rod. If the saving throw is successful, the character immediately turns away from the dazzling shadows. He must make a horror check to keep from reacting badly to the nightmare images he glimpsed. If the saving throwing fails, the character is caught up by the dream reality and pulled bodily into the dreamscape. He enters the pocket dimension as a wanderer, subject to all rules concerning wanderers in the Nightmare Lands (see page 49).

When a character stares into an inactive dream sphere, there is a chance that his subconscious mind will connect with the dreamscape within and begin to dream. The character must make a Wisdom check with a –3 penalty. If the check succeeds, the character turns away after catching the barest glimpse of an image drawn from the deepest reaches of his own mind. He must make a fear check to keep from reacting to this image. If the Wisdom check fails, the character immediately falls into a deep trance as his dream-self is pulled into the dreamscape. See the rules concerning wanderers and dreamers in the Nightmare Lands on page 49.

Because of the dangers associated with directly examining the dream spheres, there is little chance of learning about the dreamscape inside them short of somehow entering them. Neither magic nor psionic powers can penetrate the glistening shell around a dreamscape. Some powers and spells of identification can be used on the energy that seeps out of the spheres, though all this energy will reveal is who the dream seed is.

The Forest of Everchange

The constantly shifting wilderness of the Forest of Everchange lies within the hollow center of the ring formed by the permanent dream spheres. This wilderness constantly and randomly changes, but it always returns to the form of a deciduous forest at least once in every six transformations.

In the Forest of Everchange, grass may turn to water as giant trees warp into islands, cold rain may turn to searing-hot blood, and a broiling desert might subtly become a freezing arctic wasteland. Mountains rise from the ground to replace huge lakes, while forest turns to jungle to settled town seemingly in the blink of an eye.

While these changes occur with disturbing frequency, those within the forest's confines rarely notice the transformation before it is completed. The shifting of the wilderness is a subtle process. A character won't realize that the environment around him is shifting in shape, size, color, or even temperature. At some point, he simply notices that things are starkly different from what they were.

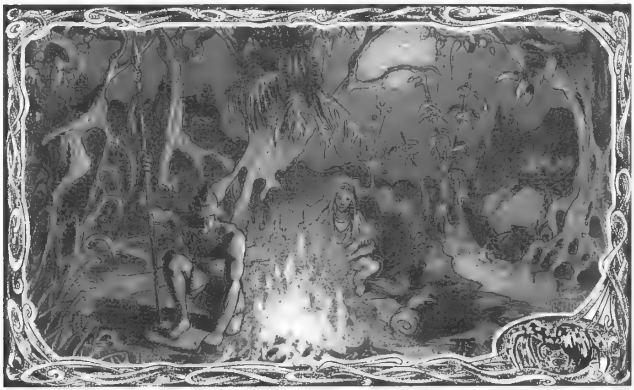
A tall mountain will not suddenly become a deep crevice, plunging those that were atop it to certain doom, but it might slowly sink into the earth, inch by inch, until the change is complete. The changing of the wilderness is like the transformation of the seasons—the

colors change so slowly and subtly that no one notices the actual process, only the fantastic results. Most areas in the Forest of Everchange retain their forms for 1d4 days before another transformation occurs.

When characters enter the forest, the DM must decide what form the landscape takes on. This decision should be based on whatever fits the adventure. If no particular terrain type is called for, use the table below.

Forest of Everchange Transformations

2d10 Roll	Terrain Type
2	Forest; lush and dark
3	Forest; sparse and dead
4	Forest; burning
5	Mountain; steep cliffs
6	Mountain; steep, wooded
7	Mountain; canyons, waterfalls
8	Mountain; volcanic
9	Plains; prickly plants
10	Plains; soft grass, soft earth like quicksand
11	Plains; arctic
12	Desert; dunes, sand pits
13	Desert; buttes, deep gorges
14	Desert; freezing, mountains of quartz
15	Water; scores of small islands
16	Water; mostly frozen, areas of treacherous ice
17	Water; raging river
18	Settled town
19	Ghost town
20	Totally alien and surreal setting



The terrain presented above has a 50% chance of having some sort of strange habitation. Everything from a hermit's shack to a dungeon with multiple levels to a giant, surreal castle might appear in this weird terrain. DMs are encouraged to be creative when detailing an area. Epic adventures can take place within one of these settings, even though it will disappear in only a few days.

Hundreds of dream spawn populate the Forest of Everchange. Perhaps because of the very nature of the place, these creatures rarely retain their natural forms while within its borders. Any dream spawn present in an area when it changes must make a saving throw vs. spell. If the save fails, the creature is transformed into a new appearance. The new form always complements the new environment, so a desert setting would give rise to hatori, desert nomads, or other beings native to that terrain type.

Many of the polymorphed dream spawn change into intelligent races, so a pack of gray morphs might suddenly become a tribe of duergar, or several shadow morphs might become a coven of vampires. The beings believe they are exactly what they appear to be, and will have complete memories of their lives prior to their change, even if the change occurred only minutes prior to the meeting.

The vast majority of creatures met in the Forest of Everchange are gray morphs wearing the shape of lesser beasts that fit a particular environment. Insects, small mammals, or a tribe of goblyns are all common forms for these dream spawn. The less numerous shadow morphs become the monsters of the new land. They may become terrible dracoliches, ancient mummies, evil adventurers, or any other monsters appropriate to the changed land.

Aside from dream spawn, the Everchange is also home to other denizens of the Nightmare Lands, including the strange Abber nomads and their outcast shamans, lost souls, feyrs, and a variety of discarded night terrors.

The City of Nod

The City of Nod has various names. Some call it the City of Forgotten Dreams, others refer to it as Nightmare City. It sits in the middle of the island, a mad metropolis that serves as the home of the Nightmare Court. This vast, ruined metropolis appears to be a ghost town, as little signs of activity can be seen in the deserted streets or shattered windows of the crumbling structures. It is only when a character stands amid the ruins that he feels alien eyes upon him or notices a shadow move at the edge of his vision.

Nod changes as often as the other areas of this domain, though it isn't the form of the place that is transformed. Instead, the buildings move and the streets shift, transforming the city into a huge puzzle that can never be solved.

To look upon the ruined buildings and littered streets is to see the discarded hopes and ancient fears of dreamers from all over the multiverse. Everything about Nod is broken and forlorn. To accent the unsettling environment, the city's canyon-like streets possess weird acoustics. A rustle on one side of the city might sound like it's right beside the listener, while a growl next to him might sound like it's coming from a mile away. Perhaps as the streets shift the air does too, carrying sounds along on its erratic journey. Regardless, there's no way to judge the location or origin of sounds made in the city.

Each member of the Nightmare Court, with the exception of Morpheus, has a lair within the City of Nod. Some of these, like the lair of Mullonga the witch, cover vast areas. Others, such as the Ghost Dancer's theater, occupy only a single building.

Reaching the Nightmare Lands

How do characters get to the Nightmare Lands? That depends on the nature of the adventure a DM wants them to participate in. However, here are some additional

guidelines to consider. Is a character entering the domain physically or through a dream? The following methods can be used to get characters physically into the Nightmare Lands. Characters who physically enter the domain are called *wanderers*.

The first is the usual technique common to all of the Demiplane of Dread. On whatever world the characters are adventuring in, the mists rise around them and when they clear the characters find themselves somewhere in the Nightmare Lands (either in the Outlands, the Forest of Everchange, or the City of Nod).

The second method involves characters attempting to reach the island of terror from some other location within the Demiplane of Dread, either a domain of the core or another island in the mists. To reach the Nightmare Lands in this way, the characters must embark upon a ship or small boat of some kind. The easiest sea path to the island is by sailing on the Dnar River and into the mists that churn east of the town of Egertus, though leaving from any port could deposit them there as well. Not every trip into the mists beyond the Dnar River ends amid the rocky shoals on the Nocturnal Sea, but 1 in 10 do. To increase the odds, characters must want to find the island and have certain directions to follow (such as those available from Dr. Illhousen or Dr. Van Richten). In this case, the chances increase to 4 in 10. Care must be taken, however. There is always a possibility that such a journey will lead to a different island of terror in the Demiplane of Dread. If leaving from another port, the whims of the mists and the dark powers must be considered.

Dreamers face other considerations. In most cases, a dreaming character has a nightmare that catches the interest of the Nightmare Court. This nightmare occurs in response to a recent event that had either traumatic or profound meaning for the character. The dreamer is then drawn into a dreamscape in the Nightmare Lands where the Court can harvest his fear and other negative emotions at their own convenience. He becomes the dream seed for that particular dreamscape. Upon waking, the dreamer returns to the waking world, but each night thereafter his dream-self is pulled back into the dreamscape.

Other dreamers can be summoned to join the dream seed through a dream power or by a dreamwalker. A dreamwalker can lead other characters through sleep to help a dream seed, or the dream seed can use the summon power to call for help himself. Finally, the Nightmare Court can use the summon power to draw other heroes into the dreamscape and increase the amount of terror generated by the unfolding scenes. After all, why let just one member of an adventuring group have all the fun?

Finally, some spells and psionic powers provide access to the dream plane. From there, a dream-self can follow the vibrations of another dreamer down into the dreamscapes of the Nightmare Lands.

Dreamers and Wanderers

Two types of characters can enter the domain of the Nightmare Lands, dreamers and wanderers. Dreamers fall asleep in the waking world and their dream-selves reach the Nightmare Lands through one of the methods listed above. Wanderers travel into the domain with their physical, waking bodies.

Dream-selves usually participate in the events taking place within dreamscapes. If a dream-self is the dream seed, he needs to increase his mental fortitude rating to break free of the dream prison (see page 26).

Other dream-selves enter a dreamscape upon crossing the Veil of Sleep and exit it when they awaken. The can participate in the dream scenes that unfold in the dreamscape, but they aren't bound to the pocket dimension the way that dream seeds are.

Dream-selves can also sometimes find their way out of a dreamscape and into the Terrain Between. Dream seeds can't do this, but other dream-selves can. To find a way out of a dreamscape, a dream-self must see beyond the images created from the dream seed's subconscious and see the inside shell of the dream sphere. This isn't an easy task. If a dream-self is actively seeking to exit a dreamscape, he must make an Intelligence check with a –6 penalty to see past the dream scene. If this check succeeds, a second Intelligence check made with a –3 penalty is needed to find an opening in the shell.

When any given dream scene changes, there is also a chance that a dream-self other than the dream seed will be expelled from the dreamscape. The chance is 40%. If a roll of 40 or less on 1d100 is made, then the dreamscape tries to expel the foreign dreamer. The dream-self must make a saving throw vs. petrification or be thrust from the dreamscape. In most cases (80%), the expelled dream-self wakes up. Otherwise, he finds himself lost in the Terrain Between.

Dream-selves in the Terrain Between appear ghostlike, more solid toward the center, more vaporous toward the ends of the extremities (arms, legs, head). A dreamer in this region can interact with the environment but he has a tougher time doing so. All attack, damage, and ability checks are made with a –4 penalty. At the same time, it's tougher for the environment to interact with him. All attack and damage rolls made against him incur the same –4 penalty. Enchanted weapons, or creatures that can harm beings who can only be hit by enchanted weapons, inflict the usual amounts of damage against dream-selves in the Terrain Between.

Every time the Terrain Between undergoes a transformation, a dream-self must make a saving throw vs. polymorph to keep from losing all physical coherence. If the saving throw fails, the dream-self becomes totally ethereal and the dreamer wakes up in 1d4 rounds.

Wanderers face different challenges in the Nightmare Lands. In the Terrain Between, a wanderer carries the reality of the waking world with him. He faces the usual risks encountered in the waking world—injury, sickness, death. In addition, the insanity of the domain affects him as well. Every time the surreality of the region imposes itself on him (he notices a terrain change, or witnesses the transformation of a dream spawn, or sees a sight that can only exist in a dream), the wanderer must make a madness check to maintain his sanity.

If a wanderer enters (or is drawn into) a dreamscape, he becomes much like a dream-self in the Terrain Between. He is less real within that reality than the dream-selves, and all of the penalties applied to dream-selves in the Terrain Between apply to a wanderer in a dreamscape. Further, there is only one way for a wanderer to escape a dreamscape. He must find a nether portal and step into it. Nether portals are usually well hidden among the icons and images produced by the dream seed. A wanderer will often have to interpret and unlock the secrets of the dream scene in order to locate a nether portal. This usually means navigating a dream dungeon or battling past some kind of dream protector.

A nether portal is a hidden doorway that leads out of a dreamscape. These doorways usually appear in mid air, a howling, windy void that leads either to the Terrain Between or even to the waking world. To use a nether portal, a wanderer must hurl himself into its howling depths. If multiple wanderers wish to travel through a nether portal together, they must hold hands and maintain their grip as each wanderer leaps in. This requires a Strength check by each wanderer. If one wanderer fails the check but the other one holding his hand succeeds, the grip remains intact. Only if both

wanderers fail the check do they lose hold of each other and separate inside the void.

Where does a nether portal take a wanderer? That depends on the wanderer. Navigating the dimensional void requires a very strong will. Even then, success isn't guaranteed. The wanderer (or lead wanderer in a group) concentrates on the destination he wishes to reach and makes a Wisdom check with a –8 penalty. If the check succeeds, the wanderer steps out at the destination he imagined. This destination must be a place the wanderer knows well and has physically visited at least once. It can be anywhere in the waking world, including beyond the mists of the Demiplane of Dread. If the check fails, the wanderer either steps back into the dreamscape he is trying to exit or into another destination as shown on the table below. If a wanderer has a dreamcatcher, the trip through the nether portal requires a Wisdom check, with no negative modifiers.

A random destination in the Demiplane of Dread includes any domain in the Core or among the Islands of Terror. Such a result often leads to new adventures as the wanderer (or wanderers) finds himself in a new place of horror and gut-wrenching fear.

1d6 Roll	Nether Portal Destination
1–3	Same dreamscape
4–5	Terrain Between
6	Random location in the Demiplane of Dread

Dream Powers of the Court

Six members of the Nightmare Court have been identified by Dr. Illhousen. There may be others. These six members are the Ghost Dancer, Hypnos, Morpheus, Mullonga, the Nightmare Man, and the Rainbow Serpent. See *The Journal of Dr. Illhousen* and the *Monstrous Supplement* included in this boxed set for descriptions and common powers of the Court. Here we discuss dream powers specific to each member and examine some important aspects of their lairs in the Nightmare Lands.

Each member of the Nightmare Court specializes in the types of victims he likes to torment. The Court's members also have their own tastes regarding the nature of their dreamscapes and the dream powers they *tend* to use within them. These villains' most frequently used powers and the ways they like to employ them are discussed in this section. Remember, however, that these are merely *tendencies*. Any Court member can use any of the dream powers listed in Chapter II.

The Ghost Dancer

Favored Powers: muddle, nightmare.

The Ghost Dancer is the harbinger of guilt and remorse. Her visitors are racked by the knowledge that they caused misery for others. She reminds victims of their tragic pasts with images, events, and persons related to it.

Most of her dreams start out with a subtle hint that some person who is believed dead still lives, or that some event didn't happen. She builds up the dream seed's hope that whatever event caused his guilt has somehow been corrected—a dead lover has somehow survived or a failed quest might somehow be regained. The Ghost Dancer leads the dreamer on for several nights, building up his hopes that there is some chance to recover that which he has lost. Then, after his long and arduous suffering, she smashes his hopes with a new nightmare.

Once the victim realizes his failure, the Ghost Dancer reminds him of the tragedy with further nightmares and with vicious attacks drawn from the event itself.

Hypnos

Favored Powers: frustration, incompetence, slow.

Dream seeds targeted by Hypnos are frustrated individuals who feel outclassed or inept in the waking world. A warrior who suffered an embarrassing defeat, a wizard who bumbled a spell at a critical moment, or even a simple farmer who works all day but still can't support his family—all are likely victims.

Hypnos likes to build tension slowly, forcing a dream seed toward an inevitable conflict with forces the hero fears he can't defeat. Often, the hero is drawn into the fight by his own Incompetence. When the confrontation finally arrives, Hypnos summons dream spawn and enacts the frustration or slow power so that the dreamer can't escape or fight back effectively.

Hypnos also uses his mesmerism (see the *Monstrous Supplement* entry) to force dream seeds to accomplish his will in the waking world. Sleepwalkers who attempt to injure others are often the victims of Hypnos's foul mental touch.

Morpheus

Favored Powers: alter dreamscape, invulnerability, polymorph.

The Master of Change, as Morpheus is sometimes called, displays the raw power of the Nightmare Lands more than any other. While the Ghost Dancer likes to fool a dreamer into believing he or she is in the waking world, Morpheus prefers to overwhelm a victim with waves of surreality and madness. His dreamscapes are always strange and utterly fantastic. Victims of the Master of Change are those who have witnessed some horrible or traumatic event, or who can't cope with a sudden change in their life.

Morpheus likes to set his torments in alien environments. Besides being able to survive in the strangest places, the villain's victims are often transformed into some creature appropriate to the setting with the polymorph power. Equipment and possessions are seldom allowed, so visitors will often be forced to survive with only their wits or own powers to aid them.

Morpheus's dream seeds often find themselves running along crumbling bridges, forced to leap across the backs of flying birds to reach the other side, or participating in some other insane and deadly trial. Even death is a learning experience to Morpheus, for he almost always uses the invulnerability power on his dream seeds.

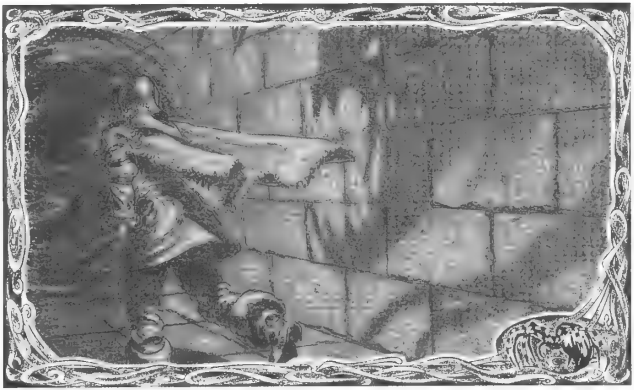
A dreamer might become an animal, or lose his head and stumble around without most of his senses, or he might even become a divine being with more power than he can control. All of Morpheus's dreamscapes are sparked by the seed's own imagination or situation, but the Master of Change excels at stretching the simplest ideas into something truly bizarre.

Mullonga

Favored Powers: alter perception, ego assault, polymorph, slow.

The aboriginal witch Mullonga chooses prey racked by fear and phobia. These fears can be caused by a terrible event, or by insanity—Mullonga doesn't discriminate.

The sheer number and variety of phobias means that Mullonga always has a wide variety of dreamscapes under her control at any given time. A dream seed who fears dogs, for instance, might find his dream-self polymorphed into a cat in a dream scene populated by vicious canines. Mullonga likes to create nightmares where her prey is chased or attempts to hide. Eventually, the source of the victim's fear catches him, and a savage attack begins. The struggle is often a running fight, the predator always keeping up with his slowed prey. The grisly end is often capped with the ego assault power, leaving the victim with the



horrible memory of death at the hands of that which he fears most as he rushes back to wakefulness.

The Rainbow Serpent

Favored Powers: befuddlement, control, muddle, summon.

The evil grin of the Rainbow Serpent does little to disguise its insidious nature. This villain's prey are those who have been, or are about to be, betrayed.

One of the serpent's favorite tactics is to find a paranoid dreamer to be his dream seed and then uses the summon power to bring a close companion of the dream seed into the dreamscape. Once the companion's dream-self arrives, the Serpent directs events so that he and the dream seed begin to suspect one another of betrayal. This usually means planting evidence or presenting lying minions in the dream scene, though the Serpent isn't above using the befuddlement and control powers to make one of the pair perform some treacherous deed and then forget about it.

The villain revels in success if he can befuddle the dreamers into not realizing that their actions took place in their dreams. That way they may come to blows in the waking world and cause even more misery.

The Nightmare Man

The Nightmare Man never personally directs a dream, though he may enter a particularly interesting dreamscape to witness the events. When he does so, the Nightmare Man always blends into the background. He rarely allows himself to be seen.

The Nightmare Man controls several powerful ennui, called the Horrors, who personally oversee his permanent dreamscapes. These dreamscapes contain

dreamers who have fallen into deep comas. Their sleeping minds keep the dreamscapes forever active. When a dream seed finally dies, the Nightmare Man quickly searches out a replacement through the powers of the mystic web.

The Web of Dreams

Through the powers of a mystical construct called the Web of Dreams, the members of the Nightmare Court have the ability to reach into the dream plane and capture dreamers suffering from dark dreams. A dream-self experiencing a nightmare can be entangled in the mystic web. Unless dragged into the Nightmare Lands, an entangled dream-self can only remain a prisoner for 1d6 nights. The dreamer wakes every morning as usual, but for up to six nights as he sleeps his dream-self continues to experience the same nightmare tangled in the web. Dreamers caught in this manner lose 1 point of Intelligence each night. The loss is temporary; lost points return at a rate of 1 point per day after the dream-self is freed from the web. These lost Intelligence points provide nourishment to the Court.

If an entangled dream-self interests a member of the Court, it is dragged into the Nightmare Lands and deposited into a permanent dreamscape. In a dreamscape, the dream-self becomes a dream seed whose fear and negative emotions amuse and nourish the members of the Court.

Each Court member is attached to the mystic web by the power of an arcane relic.

Lairs of the Nightmare Court

Each member of the Nightmare Court has a place in the Terrain Between to call home. These lairs reflect the natures of their masters and contain the seats of their powers—the wondrous relics that connect them to the Web of Dreams. These places and the relics are briefly described below.

The Grieving Cathedral

The lair of the Nightmare Man is a ruined cathedral whose stained-glass windows reflect the scenes taking place in the dreamscapes and in the minds of dreamers entangled in the Web of Dreams.

If a wanderer explores the ruins, he probably won't encounter the Nightmare Man. Anyone who stares at a scene in the stained glass must make a horror check.

The Nightmare Man's arcane relic is the beautiful Altar of Dreams in the apse of the cathedral. It provides its master with almost unlimited amounts of power. The Nightmare Court meets periodically in the Consistory Court to renew and strengthen the magic that weaves the mystic web and holds the permanent dreamscapes together.

Night terrors roam the adjoining graveyard, drawing energy from the place until their master has need of them for some terrible task.

Theater of the Macabre

The Ghost Dancer haunts this elaborate-yet-decaying theater. Scores of undead fill the theater, serving as a captive audience for the Dancer's evening performances. Within the theater, hanging above the grand lobby, is an ornate chandelier. This is the Ghost Dancer's arcane relic.

If wanderers visit the ruined theater, they may get to witness one of the Dancer's performances. Such an event, however, can shatter the strongest mind.

The Spire of Sleep

Hypnos dwells in the pale white tower shrouded in a hazy mist. The place is a living extension of its master, full of deadly traps designed to protect Hypnos from any threat.

A moat surrounds the tower. The water gives off noxious fumes that can cause sleep to overcome even those normally resistant to it (such as elves). To cross the water, a wanderer must make a saving throw vs. spell to resist the sleep-inducing fumes. Failure indicates that the wanderer falls asleep for 1d8 hours and awakens inside a dreamscape. Success means the wanderer has to deal with the next defense.

There are no doors or windows in the tower. The place can only be entered through the use of magic, and it is 65% resistant to all spells.

Inside the tower, besides facing Hypnos's powers and servants, a wanderer must deal with the permanent *slow* spell that fills the interior. It has the same effect as the 3rd-level wizard spell except that it never wears off while the wanderer is inside the tower.

Hypnos's arcane relic is the glass coffin he sleeps in.

The Forest of Everchange

Morpheus resides within the Forest of Everchange, though he has no permanent lair. His arcane relic is a huge stone arch standing deep within the shifting wilderness. Runes cover its black surface, and it is said that it is the only piece of the forest that never changes its form, an island of stability in a sea of chaos.

The Ghettoes

The witch Mullonga inhabits the Ghettoes that prowl the city of Nod like a living beast. Because of the apprehension that hangs in the air of this place, all fear and horror checks are made with a –2 penalty. Mullonga's arcane relic rests within a particularly dilapidated building. It is a huge black caldron covered in runes and filled with a bubbling black liquid.

The Park Primeval

The Rainbow Serpent dwells in the Park Primeval. The place is literally crawling with all kinds of snakes and reptiles. The Serpent usually slithers through the branches of the Tree of Suspicion, a huge tree with rune-covered bark and mystic roots that serves as this Court member's arcane relic.

Dream Spawn

Dream spawn are creatures native to the Nightmare Lands who combine the physical nature of the waking world with the etherealness of the dream plane. The Nightmare Court uses these creatures for a number of purposes, including as extras in the dream scenes that are performed within the permanent dreamscapes.

In the dream plane, dream spawn with even less physicality exist. They normally float among the dreams swirling in the Wall of Color until a rare dreamscape forms. Then they rush to taste a few moments of level 2 existence before the dreamscape fades.

The dream spawn of the Nightmare Lands are much more sinister and frightening. They assume forms pulled from the memories of dreamers. When they encounter wanderers, they absorb memories through physical contact and use of their absorption power (see the *Monstrous Supplement*).

Wanderers who have their memories absorbed lose Intelligence points. If absorption causes a wanderer's Intelligence score to drop to 0, the wanderer's physical body becomes a dream body until the lost Intelligence points are recovered. The dream spawn that absorbed the last point of Intelligence assumes the physical form of the wanderer. The wanderer can't begin

to recover the stolen points until this dream spawn is destroyed.

The Abber Nomads

To most who travel the Nightmare Lands, the Abber nomads are a strange and frustrating people. They appear to suffer from mental distress, at least from the point of view of those from a more sane world. In a realm of insanity, however, perhaps a touch of madness is necessary to survive.

The Abbers take things one moment at a time since the Forest of Everchange where they dwell is never the same from one moment to the next. Because nothing around them remains the same, the Abbers don't believe in anything they can't see. Further, if something leaves their sight, they forget about it completely. Nothing exists that isn't immediately perceptible.

Abber Society

The Abbers are the only true humans inhabiting the Forest of Everchange. (Dream spawn in the form of humans don't count.) They are a passive, occasionally helpful group. If a wanderer can learn to deal with the Abbers' unusual outlook on the world, then he might find help on rare occasions.

The strange environment of the Terrain Between has caused the Abbers to develop an equally strange philosophy and world view. As the world they know and everything in it (except for themselves) can and does change without warning, the Abbers have become convinced that only what they can perceive at any given moment is real.

The Abbers have no understanding of the concept of cause and effect. In a land where something works now and becomes useless later, where fire burns with kindling today but requires water tomorrow, the nature of the world is wild and unpredictable.

These nomads do not dream, though some members of their society do learn to dreamwalk. Perhaps their lack of dreams protects them from the attention of the Nightmare Court.

Abber tribe members practice no magic. There are no Abber wizards, and Abber priests are almost equally rare. The few Abbers who decide to take up priestly magic and try to learn about their strange world must leave the safety of their tribes and become Abber shamans.

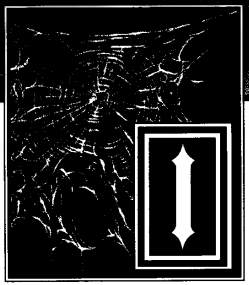
Abber shamans are the strangest and most eccentric outcasts of an already peculiar people. They are never allowed to dwell with the rest of the tribes. It is believed that the magic they wield and the knowledge they seek to gain attracts the worst denizens of the Nightmare Lands, and in some ways this is true. Morpheus and Mullonga, in particular, sometimes search out shamans for their own amusement.

Dreamcatchers

Abber shamans carry bizarre talismans called dreamcatchers. A dreamcatcher consists of a wooden staff topped by a circle of woven vines, straw, and feathers arranged in a mystic pattern. With these talismans, Abber shaman or other wanderers can safely exit a dreamscape through a nether portal and arrive wherever they want to go.

To navigate a nether portal, a wanderer must make a Wisdom check with a –8 penalty. If the wanderer carries a dreamcatcher, there is no penalty assigned to the check.

If Abber shamans enter nether portals carrying dreamcatchers, the only destinations they can reach besides the dreamscape is the Terrain Between, specifically the Forest of Everchange. No other destinations are available to Abber shamans, even if they wish to go elsewhere.



CHAPTER IV: DR. ILLHOUSEN'S CLINIC

"I had the most terrible dream last night ..."
—any patient at the clinic

On the outskirts of Egertus, in the domain of Nova Vaasa, a huge, foreboding building rises above the banks of the Dnar River. Most of the people of Egertus call it "the sanitarium." The plaque above the door reads "The Clinic for the Mentally Distressed." Disturbed people from all over the Core lands find a haven within these stone walls. Any kind of mental distress can be treated here, but the chief physician, Dr. Gregorian Illhousen, specializes in sleep disorders and the terrors generated by dreams and nightmares. Illhousen is a dedicated servant to those in need, never turning a patient away due to lack of funds or fear of personal danger. For most, his casual manner and understanding nature lead to an eventual cure or treatment. For the select few who seem tormented by the foulest dreams, Illhousen is nothing less than a personal crusader. Indeed, the doctor is engaged in a personal and secret war—a war against the Nightmare Court.

The building was established as a sanitarium many years before Illhousen was born. When he became a doctor, he went to work for the place. Over time, as his own position grew, he led the movement to change not only the name but the very nature of the sanitarium. He helped turn it into a clinic.

Illhousen believes that kind and compassionate treatment will heal more than electric shock therapy, experimental medicines, and immersions in mildly acidic juices—all methods commonly employed by others physicians in the field, including his associate, Dr. Tasker.

Dr. Harrod Tasker is the antithesis of Illhousen. He believes in the old ways—the whip, the rack, and any other device that disciplines the patient through pain. He treats the deranged like animals, punishing them when they do wrong with suffering of one sort or another. Illhousen and Tasker have almost come to blows over their disagreements, especially when one interfered in the other's cases. Unfortunately, the town of Egertus runs the clinic, even though Dr. Illhousen is listed as the chief physician. Illhousen has secretly petitioned for Tasker's release, but the town officials are reluctant to lose a doctor when the clinic is filled to overflowing.

Dr. Tasker

Dr. Harrod Tasker has spent the last 15 years in Dr. Illhousen's shadow. Their colleagues in the medical circles have begun to take Illhousen's compassionate treatments seriously. This was blasphemy to Tasker, who is devoted to conditioning, the traditional practice of reward and punishment used to influence the behavior of the insane.

Eventually, Dr. Tasker's jealousy grew, especially when the renowned Dr. Rudolph van Richten traveled to Egertus to visit not him, but that fool Illhousen. During the visit, Illhousen sought to prove his therapy to Van Richten by releasing several of his most advanced patients. But Tasker wasn't fooled. He knew the clever psychotics were only pretending to be cured of their afflictions. So he hired men within Egertus to poke and prod the former inmates. Nothing came of it, much to Tasker's fury, but when Illhousen learned of the incident he became enraged.

Illhousen and his new friend Van Richten marched into Tasker's office and chastised him, in Tasker's opinion, as though he was a child. They didn't treat him like a fellow professional (again, in Tasker's opinion) but instead ganged up against him.

Dr. Tasker snapped that day. He knew he would wreak revenge on Illhousen, but he wasn't sure how. Eventually, he fell into a deep sleep. In his dreams, he wandered the halls of the clinic and stalked the professor (who appeared much like a squealing pig). He even dreamed of slicing the screaming Illhousen into fat, greasy strips. Then a strange figure approached through the dark halls of the clinic. It was the Nightmare Man. He told Tasker that this was the Nightmare Lands, a place that Illhousen had begun to study. It was a study that the Nightmare Man did not appreciate.

If Tasker would help him, the Nightmare Man would promise to do more than slay Illhousen—he would drive him insane. Tasker agreed, and within a month the night terror mistakenly believed to be the ghost of Mandalain began to stalk the halls of the clinic.

Tasker has learned much about the Nightmare Lands since then, at least as much as Illhousen. Illhousen doesn't know that his colleague is in league with the Nightmare Court, but he does suspect that Tasker has learned of his research. Perhaps, Illhousen thinks, Tasker talked to Illhousen's friends with whom he's shared his knowledge, or possibly from reading Illhousen's journal, which he now keeps locked tightly away.

Tasker is now content to leave Illhousen to his suffering at the spectral hands of Mandalain. When Illhousen eventually goes insane, the clinic and the reputation will become Dr. Harrod Tasker's, and his name will be honored by the rest of the medical world. At least, this is what Tasker dreams of.

The Clinic and Grounds

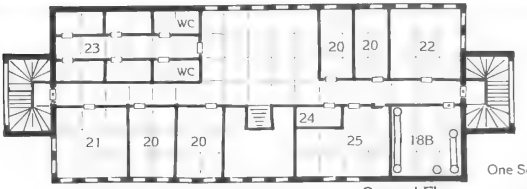
Dr. Illhousen and his clinic are known throughout the domains of the Core. Men and women from as far away as Markovia have come to seek release from mental illness, especially from problems relating to nightmares. Most of those who seek help are still relatively sane. They visit with either Dr. Illhousen or Dr. Tasker for 1d4 months, paying 100 gold for each month of treatment. Those who can't pay are turned away by Tasker, but Illhousen accepts most cases in return for doing chores around the clinic. If a patient is especially ill, Illhousen treats him for free.

Those who check themselves into the clinic may come and go as they wish. Those who are admitted by someone else must be released by either Illhousen or Tasker. Nonviolent patients may stay in the apartments on the second floor. They may wander about by day as they wish, but are locked in their rooms at night.

The truly insane, those who are locked away in the lowest wards, are rarely released. Many of these are sent to the clinic by the officials of Egertus, who pay a nominal fee for their incarceration. They are locked into tiny cells and only allowed to leave under supervision of a doctor and several orderlies.

Treating the Mentally Distressed

Those who come here of their own volition may see Dr. Illhousen or Dr. Tasker—most choose the former. Treatment under Dr. Illhousen adds a +3 bonus to the madness recovery saving throw roll as detailed in the *Realm of Terror* rules book from the RAVENLOFT campaign set. Dr. Tasker's treatment imparts a –1 penalty to the save. Tasker isn't a bad doctor when compared to his peers in asylums across the Core, but that's not saying much. Illhousen's revolutionary approach is certainly better, and it doesn't involve such tools of the trade as shock therapy and exploratory surgery.



Second Floor

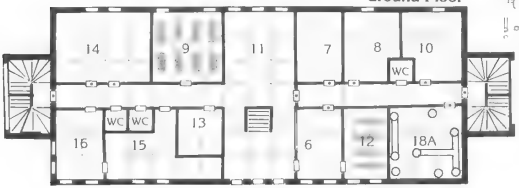
Key

One Square = 10 Feet

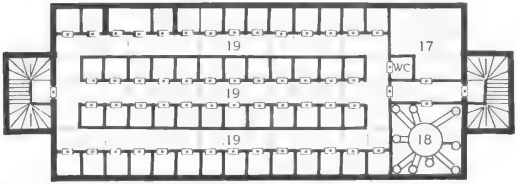
- Door
- Locked Door
- Window
- Stairs
- WC Water Closet
- Shelves/ File Cabinets
- Boiler
- Catwalks and Piping

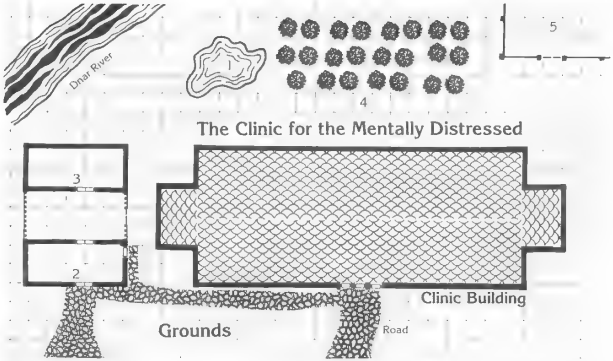
The Clinic for the Mentally Distressed

Ground Floor



Basement





The Grounds

The Clinic for the Mentally Distressed was built expressly as a sanitarium over 50 years ago. Its brown facade and well-kept grounds are cheery compared to the dirty gray corridors within. The reason for this is simple. Few of the outside grounds-keepers have met with the horrible ghost of Mandalain. The cleaning staff inside left when the spirit appeared just over a year ago.

Locations shown on the map of the clinic are described below.

1. Pond: A natural pond lies at the rear of the hospital. Within it are brightly colored goldfish and painted turtles. Dr. Illhousen sometimes charges certain patients with feeding the fish in an effort to teach them compassion and responsibility. In the winter, he often rewards his patients by allowing them to ice skate upon its frozen surface.

2. Tool Shed and Carriage House: Three horse-drawn carriages are stored in one part of this building. The rest is taken up by grounds-keeping tools such as rakes and clippers.

3. Stable: Four horses are allowed to run free within the fenced perimeter of the stables. Inside the barn, hay, water, oats, and the tack and harnesses used to hitch the animals to the carriages are stored.

4. Peach Orchard: A grove of peach trees beautifies this area. Dr. Illhousen sometimes takes his patients out to the orchard to help pick peaches. These are then served with the evening meal.

5. Graveyard: Sometimes the hospital's inmates die. Some commit suicide, some simply die of old age, and a growing number find death through the machinations of the Nightmare Court.

The clinic's graveyard is a quiet place bordered by a wrought-iron fence. Only

Illhousen and Tasker have keys to the gate. It always seems dark in the graveyard, for the tall trees of the nearby forest cast inky shadows on the thick grass and gray headstones.

The Building, Ground Floor

The ground floor of the clinic houses the staff's offices, the kitchen and dining areas, and work rooms. The center of the building is decorated in tasteful orange marble with red drapes and accessories. A large staircase in the lobby is made of similar marble and leads to the private offices above.

At either end of the building are extra-wide staircases. These were constructed to ease the transport of gurneys up and down the floors. They are always locked, though every person on staff has a key that opens all of the stairway doors.

Other locations shown on the map of the clinic are described below.

6. Nurse's Station: Caroline Dinwiddy is the chief nurse of the clinic. She or one of four other nurses are always here. There are three desks, a sign-in book for visitors, and common medical instruments. In a locked file cabinet are the initial evaluations of those brought to the clinic by the officials of Egertus. Post admittance records are stored in location 7.

A gurney with leather straps and heavy buckles always waits in the hall to the north in case of emergencies.

Whenever the front doors open, a small bell rings in this office. Guests and visitors of the clinic must always check in with the nurses before going any farther.

Besides the nurses, two male orderlies are always on call. They transport patients and inmates or do heavy work around the hospital. None of these men have worked here for long. The ghost of Mandalain has scared away their predecessors, but more have always been attracted by the relatively generous pay the city offers.

Nurse: Int Avg (10); AC 10; MV 12; HD 0-level, 3 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML Average (8); AL NG

Orderly: Int Avg (8); AC 10; MV 12; HD 0-level, 6 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); ML Average (9); AL LN

7. Holding: When the violently insane are first brought to the clinic, this is where they are held until Dr. Illhousen or Dr. Tasker is ready to take them below. The room is padded for the occupant's protection.

8. Shock Therapy: A metal bed with leather straps is the central feature of this room. Nearby is a hand-powered generator which sends electrical currents into the bed and anyone lying atop it. On a table are probes, scalpels, and other instruments certain to cause nightmares in those sane enough to recognize them. Only Dr. Tasker uses this room and the devices within. He never allows anyone to watch his handiwork and always locks the doors during his sessions. Tasker has even painted over the windows to insure that no one can spy on him during therapy.

Anyone on the bed when the generator's crank is turned suffers excruciating but typically nonfatal pain. The victim loses 1d2 hit points per round, and Dexterity is reduced by 1 point as the nervous system is temporarily overloaded. Dexterity returns at the rate of 1 point every turn. No one can ever drop below half their normal score due to electrical shock.

9. Library: This room is filled with rows and rows of shelves. Thousands of books covering subjects ranging from mental illness to the history of Nova Vaasa can be found if enough time is spent looking for them. Unfortunately, the books are not organized, nor are there any rare texts.

10. Chemist's Room: The hospital used to employ a chemist to make whatever medicines were needed. He was slain in a grisly accident in this very room only a few months ago. Since then, the doctors have had to rely on chemists

in Egertus for their medicines.

The room was cleaned after the chemist's death, but dark blood stains and shards of glass can still be seen in the cracks of the gray floor. There is little in the way of chemicals here, but beakers, vials, burners, and almost any chemical apparatus can be found here in small quantities.

11. Waiting Parlor: Guests and family members wait in this simple but elegant parlor. It has several plush couches and chairs, and the nurses always set a pot of hot tea on the service when guests are present. Though the cleaning staff has long since fled the haunted clinic, the nurses keep this area clean and the windows open to make the area as comfortable as possible to visitors.

12. Administration: The old administrator was another of Mandalain's victims. The task of updating and maintaining patient's records has now fallen to Chief Nurse Dinwiddy. It is a job she does well but isn't particularly fond of. Since she has many other responsibilities, this room is usually vacant, though the door is locked. Patient's mental evaluations, notes from sessions, and their medical histories are all kept in the rows of file cabinets in this office. These are supposed to be updated every week, but both Illhousen and Tasker often hang on to their notes for over a month before finally submitting them to the official records.

Finding a specific patient's file is relatively easy since Nurse Dinwiddy alphabetized the system. Such attempts should take but 1d4 turns.

13. Staff Lounge: Five nurses, two orderlies, three cooks, and two grounds-keepers are the only remaining staff at the clinic. House-keeping and maintenance personnel have all fled after spotting the fiendish Mandalain. The reduced staff means few breaks are allowed, so the lounge has seen little use of late.

14. Operating Room: Occasionally an inmate or staff member suffers an injury that requires serious medical attention. If so, they are brought to this room. An operating table and crude instruments such as saws, probes, and scalpels are locked in a cabinet on the wall. A hand pump on the wall is connected to the clinic's well and provides fresh water.

15: Kitchen: Three cooks remain in the service of the hospital, where once there was a staff of 11. The kitchen contains preparation tables and a well stocked pantry filled with milk, meat, and vegetables. Pumps run from the well outside to give the kitchen running water. The porcelain sinks are filled with dirty pots and pans. The three cooks must now feed the entire hospital population, so cleaning is a very low priority. Unfortunately, this has given rise to a serious infestation of rats and insects. Anyone in the kitchen after dark has a 3-in-6 chance of encountering 1d20 rats.

Rats: Int Animal (1); AC 7; MV 15; HD 1/4; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA disease; ML Unreliable (3); AL N

16. Dining Room: The staff of the hospital once took their meals here. Now the staff prefers to eat their meals in quiet isolation, watching the shadows to insure Mandalain isn't about to spring one of her eerie attacks.

The Building, Basement

The lowest floor of the clinic is often called the sanitarium or the lower wards by the staff. Here, the most disturbed patients, those too violent or mad to remain loose, are kept. Insane cackling, hideous laughter, and bizarre songs echo through the dark corridors. Even the staff, after years of exposure to this dismal dungeon, shiver whenever they are forced to enter the lower wards.

17. Therapy Room: Illhousen and Tasker rarely treat the violent patients in their cells. They prefer to take them to this brighter, padded room. Inside, a restraining chair can be raised or lowered to put the patient in a reclined or upright position. The straps are made of boiled leather, and require a bend

bars/lift gates roll with a –10% penalty to break. A single chair for the attending physician is the only other furniture in this barren chamber. The door automatically locks when closed, and has a window that can be slid open for viewing from the outside. An orderly always waits outside when a patient is undergoing a session. Tasker requires that the window be closed while he conducts therapy.

18. Boiler Room: The clinic relies on natural gas for its lighting and steam for its heat. This three level room runs the height of the hospital and houses the machinery for both. A metal staircase and a series of catwalks fills the upper reaches of the boiler chamber. These are used not only to get to the boiler from any level, but also to work on the long pipes that run from the furnace up through ducts that run throughout the hospital. These ducts are large enough to crawl through.

For lighting, gas is pumped in from a natural source and provides fuel for the lanterns ensconced in the various halls, offices, and stairwells. Most of these are extinguished when not in use, but lamps in the stairwells and the parlors burn constantly unless put out by an occasional burst of wind.

Water from the large pond outside passes through the boiler. The resulting steam rises through ducts to the upper levels and provides heats. The boiler is fueled by coal, delivered once a month in the winter by local miners.

19. Wards: Entering the maze of cells that hold the clinic's most violent residents is enough to test anyone's nerve. Many of the inmates become hyper and irritated whenever they hear someone approaching. Arms reach from windows and obscene catcalls can be heard from behind closed doors.

The Building, Second Floor

The doctors' offices fill the top floor of the building. Once there was a team of eight physicians in residence at the clinic. Over the last year, most of these men were driven out or even slain by the vengeful ghost of Mandalain. One of them even resides in the wards far below. Illhousen and Tasker now have the entire floor to themselves, each man isolated in a separate wing.

20. Empty Offices: The physicians that once worked here often left in a hurry. Papers on treatments and notes on particular patients lie strewn about the floors and fill the half-open drawers of the desks.

21. Dr. Illhousen's Office: Illhousen spends much more of his time in this room than he does at his own apartment in Egertus. He rarely returns home as the work never ends.

Illhousen keeps the windows clean so that his patients may stare out at the bright sunshine as they recline on the couch. His book shelves are filled with texts similar to those found in the library. Most have layers of dust on them as if they haven't been referenced in ages. One book that might prove useful is an excellent work on the theory and use of hypnotism. If read, a character may choose hypnotism as one of his next nonweapon proficiencies when the slots become available.

In a beaten mahogany desk are several drawers full of notes, scribbles, and observations about the various patients two floors below. In one of the drawers, locked with a key that only Illhousen possesses, is a copy of *The Journal of Dr. Illhousen* that has been addressed to Dr. Van Richten. All the information he has gathered on the Nightmare Lands is inside. He feels that sharing this information with others would most likely only create more fear, which would in turn cause nightmares that would feed the Nightmare Court. For this reason, he shares this information with only a few trusted souls. He has discussed much with Dr. Tasker, but no longer feels that sharing his knowledge with that individual is beneficial to the cause.

Also among his private papers are notes concerning the recent treatment that he provided for Dr. Rudolph van Richten. It seems Van Richten came to Illhousen complaining of nightmares concerning his own death, and Illhousen had to hospitalize him for a time. While the final notes indicate that he is still concerned about his friend's health, Illhousen released Van Richten a short time ago.

22. Dr. Tasker's Office: Once Dr. Harrod Tasker was a very neat and organized man. He believed in order and discipline above all else. Just over a year ago, however, Tasker's life-long obsession mysteriously changed. The doctor maintains his own personal appearance meticulously, but the state of his office hints that madness lurks beneath his immaculate facade. Now papers, files, books, and journals lie strewn all about the office. Someone not familiar with Tasker's ways might think that the place has been ransacked, but this is now its normal state.

Among the mess are notes and papers on patients and anatomical research. An Intelligence check reveals that many of the notes have to do with vivisection of the brain. In a locked drawer in Tasker's desk is a journal. The last entry is just over a year old and reveals that he is responsible for the summoning of the night terror known as Mandalain. Tasker stopped taking notes after this event, which is also when his habit for keeping things orderly disintegrated.

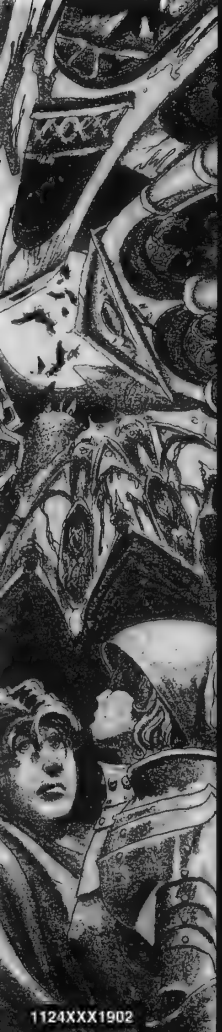
23. Apartments: Nonviolent patients are allowed to stay in these private rooms. The furniture is sparse but expensive, consisting of a bed, desk, wardrobe, and chest. A common water closet situated outside is shared by all. Dr. Illhousen frequently allows those who are working for him to inhabit these quarters.

24. Doctor's Water Closet: This private water closet has running water operated by a hand-pump. There are also a number of wooden lockers for those who want to keep personal toiletries at hand. Dr. Illhousen keeps a razor, shaving cream, and other effects in his unlocked cabinet because of his frequent sleep-overs, but the rest are empty.

25. Shower Room: The showers serve a dual purpose. Any of the staff who become soiled after dealing with a inmate can use this facility to clean up. Hot water is available whenever the boiler is running, and can be obtained simply by operating a hand-pump and turning a handle which allows the heated water into the plumbing.

The second function of the showers is to clean inmates . For this purpose, handcuffs and a leather harness fitted with handling poles is kept in a utility closet. The orderlies can use this to maneuver a resisting patient under the water.

The Clinic in the Nightmare Lands
There is a nightmare version of the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed in the City of Nod. It looks much the same as the clinic in the waking world except that it is darker and more dismal. When Dr. Tasker dreams, his dream-self travels to this nightmare clinic and serves as its chief physician. Here, all manner of torture and experiment can be performed in the name of science, and Tasker is in his glory. This is his reward for continuing to serve the Nightmare Court in the waking world.



"Even the shifting, ever-changing domain of the Nightmare Lands has rules. The problem is they are only as stable as the realm they define...."

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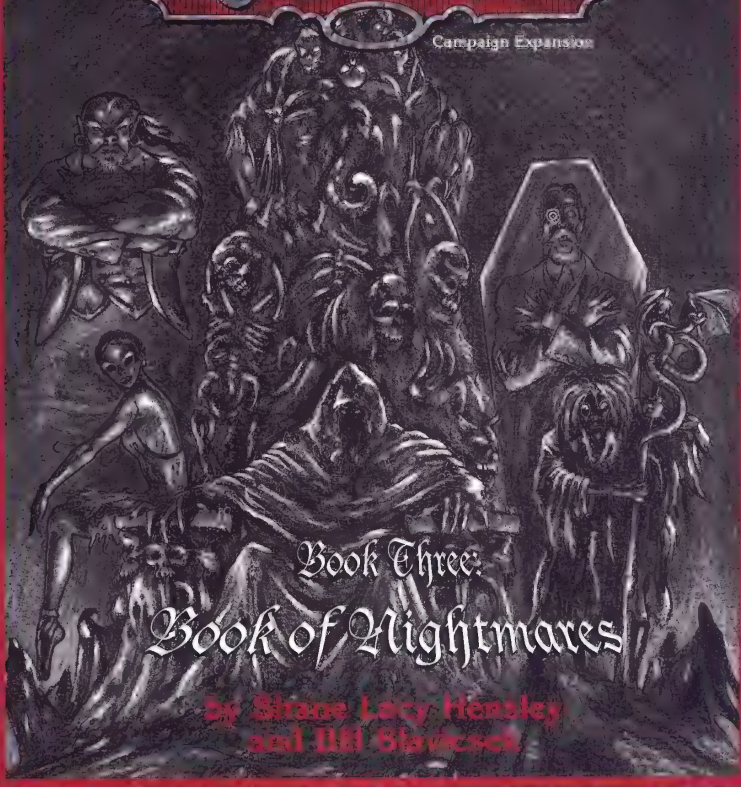

Book Three:

Book of Nightmares

by Bruce Lacy Hensley
and Bill Slavicsek

BOOK THREE:

THE BOOK OF NIGHTMARES

by Shane Lacy Hensley
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INTRODUCTION

id your mother tell you it was just a nightmare? Did she assure you that nightmares can't hurt you? She lied!"
—Abukar the Insane

This adventure book contains a series of adventures for use with the situations presented in the other books included in this boxed set. Each adventure can be played separately or as part of a mini-campaign. Characters can be of any level of experience for the first three adventures, but the last adventure requires characters of levels 7 or higher. The rest assume a natural experience progression. Any one of the adventures can easily be adjusted to handle any Dungeon Master's group. This book is for the use of the DM only. Read *The Journal of Dr. Illhousen* and *The Rules of Dreams and Nightmares* before trying to run any of these adventures.

The adventures are designed to introduce the concepts of dream reality and the Nightmare Lands into a campaign. The first adventure presents the heroes with experiences in the first level of reality and also provides them with two clues that can be used to set up the other adventures: a dead man and a battered journal.

In the second adventure, one of the heroes becomes a dream seed for the Nightmare Court. The rest of the group is summoned through dream powers so that they can participate in the nightmare to come.

The third adventure introduces the heroes to Dr. Gregorian Illhousen and his Clinic for the Mentally Distressed. He requests their help, as he needs dreamwalkers to enter a sea captain's dreams to free the man from his nocturnal torments.

Finally, the last adventure requires that the heroes physically enter the Nightmare Lands to retrieve the one item that can destroy the night terror that haunts the clinic. The heroes must navigate the Terrain Between, locate the item, then find a way to return to Nova Vaasa.

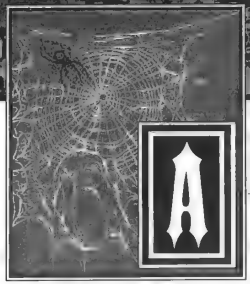
Starting These Adventures

The adventures in this book are written from the point of view that the heroes are starting out from one of the domains in the Demiplane of Dread, specifically from a core domain. However, through the use of the Mists or the connections all worlds have to the dream plane, the heroes can start out from almost anywhere in the multiverse. If the heroes aren't currently in a Demiplane of Dread location, the DM will either have to alter the opening adventures herein or create an introductory scenario of his own to get the heroes to a good transition point.

How To Use This Book

Running the adventures in this book requires the core AD&D® rules books (*Player's Handbook* and *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*), the RAVENLOFT® Campaign Setting boxed set, and the other books in this product. The adventures show how to create dream and nightmare adventures with a definite RAVENLOFT flavor. Keep in mind that many of the rules concerning dreams and nightmares can be used in any campaign setting. It is the presence of the Nightmare Court in particular that makes a dream or nightmare adventure also a RAVENLOFT adventure.

Read through each scenario before attempting to run it, as properly handling a dream scene can be tricky. Picturing each scene in your mind helps you visualize it to the players.



ADVENTURE 1: DREAMS WITHIN DREAMS

nd then you woke up just won't cut it here! Yes, it's only a dream, but it's also very, very real! Don't you know anything?"
—Abukar the Insane

"Dreams Within Dreams" provides a group of heroes with the first hints that there is something more to dreams and nightmares than images caused by eating a big meal right before bedtime. It brings them into contact with the first level of reality. One hero who experiences a nightmare also catches the interest of Hypnos, a member of the Nightmare Court. This leads to another revelation—dreams can have a profound and even dangerous affect on the waking world. Finally, in the waking world the heroes encounter someone else who has been troubled by nightmares. This person is so tormented that he believes his only method of escape is to kill the person in his dreams. The heroes can't stop this nightmare-inspired violence, but they will reap an award. They find *The Journal of Dr. Illhousen* and the letter from the doctor that is addressed to the dead man.

Getting Started

This is not a linear adventure complete unto itself. The dreams and nightmares take place one night while the heroes are involved in some other adventure. The following day, while they are still working toward the conclusion of the primary adventure, they encounter the nightmare-plagued villain and his victim, the friend of Dr. Illhousen. Before the heroes follow up on these events, they should finish whatever adventure this scenario was dropped into.

A Night of Dreams

After a particularly hard day of adventuring, when the heroes settle down for a night of rest and sleep overcomes them, they all experience vivid dreams and nightmares. Vivid dreams and nightmares are described on page 14 of the rules book included with this boxed set. These are the only types of level 1 dreams that carry over into the waking world.

Though no roll is needed to check if these are vivid dreams (they are), have the players make Wisdom checks for their characters to determine who has a vivid dream and who has a vivid nightmare. For the purposes of this scenario, half of the group should have dreams and half should have nightmares. The three characters (assuming there are six characters in the group) who make the lowest rolls for their Wisdom checks experience vivid dreams. The three characters who make the highest rolls experience vivid nightmares.

As each hero drifts off to sleep, pick one of the vivid dreams or nightmares presented below. The DM should feel free to alter a dream or nightmare to better fit a particular hero. One dream and nightmare is presented for each character group (warrior, wizard, priest, and rogue). The DM can use a dream or nightmare more than once if necessary, or can create new ones that follow the same format as those presented here.

Vivid Dreams and Nightmares Checks
After a vivid dream ends, have the dreamer make a system shock roll with a +5% bonus. If the roll succeeds, the good feelings produced by the vivid dream provide the hero with a +1 bonus to all die rolls for the next 24 hours. If the roll fails (and rolls of 96% or higher are considered failures), the hero still feels good, he just doesn't receive

bonuses for his good mood.

After a vivid nightmare ends, have the dreamer make a system shock roll with a –25% penalty. If the roll fails, the awful emotions produced by this vivid nightmare provides the hero with a –1 penalty to all die rolls for the next 24 hours. If the roll succeeds, the hero still feels uneasy, he just doesn't receive any penalties for this lingering dread.

Vivid Dream, Warrior

Read or paraphrase the following vivid dream scene to a hero who is a warrior character.

You stand upon a field of battle, the sweet aroma of fragrant flowers filling your senses, the bright sun shining in your eyes. Your enemy surrounds you, six huge gnolls with leering faces and terrible breath. They do not frighten you, however. Instead, the call of battle sings inside you, giving supernatural strength to your arms and deadly accuracy to your keen eyes. With a roar of exuberance, you dance into your enemies midst, felling each one with a single swipe of your glowing sword. You feel alive, powerful, unbeatable as the dream ends and wakefulness bursts upon you.

Vivid Nightmare, Warrior

Read or paraphrase the following vivid nightmare scene to a warrior hero.

You stand upon a field of battle, the foul odor of rotting flesh and drying blood filling your senses, the cries of your dying companions ringing in your ears. Your enemy surrounds you, six huge gnolls with leering faces and terrible breath. They frighten you, for weariness has settled into your aching muscles and pain from a dozen cuts clouds your mind. With a terrifying roar, the first gnoll charges toward you, swinging a heavy, spiked club with the force of a gale wind. You see it rushing for you, ready to crush the life from your body as the nightmare ends and wakefulness bursts upon you.

Vivid Dream, Wizard

Read or paraphrase the following vivid dream scene to a hero who is a wizard character.

After a lifetime of futile searching, you have finally located the spell book of Anthog Vonkriz. Excitement rises inside you as you run your fingers along the worn, rough-leather cover, stirring up dust that makes you sneeze. You open the book. Parchment sheets crackle as the heavy weight of the cover lifts away. Turning page after page fills you with even greater delight. Every spell you need to complete your own book is here! With a great sense of accomplishment, you emerge from the dream feeling fresh, alive, and motivated.

Vivid Nightmare, Wizard

Read or paraphrase the following vivid nightmare scene to a wizard hero.

After a lifetime of futile searching, you have finally located the spell book of Anthog Vonkriz. Excitement rises inside you as you run your fingers along the worn, rough-leather cover, stirring up dust that makes you sneeze. You open the book.

Parchment sheets crackle as the heavy weight of the cover lifts away. As you the turn pages, a sense of uneasiness begins to grow in the pit of your stomach. You

recognize the arcane runes scrawled across the pages, but you can't read them. It gnaws at you, for you know something about these runes, you just can't remember what it is.

You turn another page and black mist rises up from the ink. The mist forms into hands as black as shadow and as putrid as an open grave. Misty fingers touch your throat, seeking to squeeze the life from you. A scream builds, and it follows you out of a tiring sleep to shatter the quiet of the night.

Vivid Dream, Priest

Read or paraphrase the following vivid dream scene to a hero who is a priest character.

You have come to this graveyard to remember an old friend and bestow a blessing. The scene is peaceful, nearly silent in the bright sunshine. It doesn't take long to find the stone marker, and you bow your head in prayer. You remember good times and past adventures. For a moment, it's as though your friend were right beside you. His comforting presence makes the memories that much more poignant, and a great feeling of happiness spreads through you. You feel as though you have been blessed and this gives you hope as you come fully awake.

Vivid Nightmare, Priest

Read or paraphrase the following vivid nightmare scene to a priest hero.

You have come to this graveyard to remember an old friend and bestow a blessing. The silence of the place and the

darkening sky give you pause, for they project an ominous mood throughout the withered trees and crumbling headstones. Suddenly ground trembles and rises up, taking on the form of a human composed of dirt, graves, and rotting bodies. Among those bodies, you see the friend you came to remember. His dead eyes turn toward you, and his dry voice sounds like claws scratching on slate. "Join me," he says as a huge fist of dirt rises over you. "I've missed you, my friend," he says as the huge fist flies downward and you awaken with a start.

Vivid Dream, Rogue

Read or paraphrase the following vivid dream scene to a hero who is a rogue character.

You wander the streets of a crowded town, listening to the sounds of life that ring out loud and strong. Everyone who passes you is fat and rich, dressed in fine garments and reeking of expensive perfumes. They all wear money pouches in plain sight, and you can pluck as many as you want as though they were apples on low-hanging branches. What's more, no one seems to notice you. You can take all you want. No one screams at you. No one chases you. No one calls for the town guard. You feel confident and positively gleeful as the dream ends and morning shines in your blinking eyes.

Vivid Nightmare, Rogue

Read or paraphrase the following vivid nightmare scene to a rogue hero.

You wander the streets of a crowded town, listening to the sounds of life that ring out loud and strong. Everyone who passes you is fat and rich, dressed in fine garments and reeking of expensive perfumes. They all wear money pouches in plain sight, and it appears that you can pluck as many as you want as though they were apples on low-hanging branches. However, your fingers feel stiff and clumsy as you reach for a purse. You bump into the man, who cries out for the town guard. You limbs feel like stone weights and before you can turn to run a dozen guards surround you. You try to surrender, but they slash at your hands with sharp swords. Your hands fall away with loud thumps as you spring awake.

The Sleepwalking Hero

Let another day of adventuring pass. Throughout this day the heroes must apply any bonuses or penalties earned from the vivid dreams and nightmares of the night before. When the time comes to sleep again, randomly select one of the heroes who suffered from a vivid nightmare. This is the hero whose nightmare attracted the attention of Hypnos.

Hypnos, a member of the Nightmare Court, entangles the selected hero's dream-self in the Web of Dreams and makes him or her experience the same nightmare again. While this nightmare is playing out, Hypnos directs his will at the dreamer in order to plant a hypnotic suggestion.

As you once again read the nightmare scene that the hero dreamed the night before, have the player make a Wisdom check with a –6 penalty. If the check succeeds, the hero has shrugged off Hypnos's influence. He awakes with only lingering feelings of dread (the nightmare isn't a vivid nightmare this time), but he loses 1 point of Intelligence. See "Web of Dreams" on page 54 of the rules book included with this boxed set.

If the check fails, the hero falls under Hypnos's influence. Hypnos plants a suggestion that the hero will wake up but still think he is sleeping. In this state, he will walk

over to his nearest companion and try to kill him. (The suggestion is that a long-time enemy is sleeping nearby, not a companion, and the only way to destroy him once and for all is to do it while he sleeps.)

As this probably goes against the hero's alignment, the hero gets to make another Wisdom check (with a –2 penalty this time) before actually completing the deed. Other heroes will see their sleep-walking companion move toward them with a weapon in his hands and a blank stare in his eyes. What they do to stop him is up to them, though the sleep-walker isn't responsible for his actions. See Hypnos's entry in the *Monstrous Supplement* for more details.

Either way, the hero temporarily loses a point of Intelligence to the Nightmare Court. Roll 1d6 to determine how many nights this pattern will continue. Each night that it does, Hypnos tries to get the hero to complete his evil suggestion. After all of the nights indicated by the 1d6 roll have passed, Hypnos will leave the hero alone.

The Sleepwalking Foe

After the nights of Hypnos's suggestions end, the heroes encounter another sleepwalker in whatever town they happen to be visiting. This sleepwalker isn't a villain; he is simply responding to Hypnos's suggestion.

In recent months, Dr. Illhousen has been suffering from increasingly worse conditions. The number of patients crowding his clinic has grown almost unmanageable, and his staff is shrinking at an alarming rate. Most of these problems relate to the presence of the night terror, Mandalain. The fact that the Nightmare Court has increased its torment of his sleep has simply added to the problems.

To combat the situation, Dr. Illhousen has sent his journal and a letter asking for help to his friend Thorin. Thorin is a ranger who has helped both Illhousen and Dr. Van Richten in the past. This time, however, he will not get a

chance to help. The Nightmare Court has marked him for death, and their instrument is a sleepwalker under Hypnos's control. Read:

> The night is warm, though a thick mist has risen from the cobbled streets. The mist gives the street lanterns a mystical glow. As you move down the street, you hear an angry shout. "What do you want?" shouts the deep voice. A moment later, the same voice screams in pain. The mist clears in front of an alley across the street. You see a man with a bloody sword standing over a figure that has crumbled to the ground.

The standing figure is the sleepwalker, a chimney sweep named Barthow. The crumbled figure is Thorin, who has just received a killing blow. Barthow remains in a trance for a few more moments, simply standing over Thorin's body. Thorin will be dead by the time the heroes reach his side.

If they approach, have the heroes make Wisdom checks with –3 penalties to see if they notice anything peculiar about Barthow. If any hero makes the check, he notices that Barthow's eyes are wide and blank, just like the hero who sleepwalked a few night's back (if any did). Otherwise, Barthow comes out of the trance a few moments later or if the heroes inflict damage upon him. He begs for mercy, saying he is innocent of any crime despite the evidence to the contrary. Barthow remembers nothing about the incident and has no idea who Thorin is. If pressed, he does admit to having nightmares lately, but "that doesn't mean I'm a killer," he states with little conviction.

Checking Thorin

If the heroes examine Thorin, they see that they are too late to help him. The sword strike cut into his heart and killed him instantly. On further investigation, they see that he wears the trappings of a ranger or woodsman. He carries the weapons of a fighter—long sword, two daggers, leather armor, various traveling supplies. The long sword is enchanted. It is a *long sword +2*. Thorin also has a leather book wrapped in a bag. Both the bag and the book inside are lying on the ground beside the body.

If the heroes open the bag, they see a fairly new leather book. It has no title on the spine or cover, but if they open it to the first page they see the words, "The Journal of Dr. Illhousen." Give the players the copy of *The Journal of Dr. Illhousen* included with this boxed set. If any hero pages through the book, a letter falls out of it. The letter is the same as the one printed on page 32 of *The Journal of Dr. Illhousen*. The letter is addressed to Thorin Angarblade, requesting his help. It is dated only a few days before this scene takes place.

The Town Guards

After the heroes have subdued or otherwise dealt with Barthow and examined Thorin's body, the town guards arrive. They order everyone to stand still, then ask someone to explain what happened. It does not take long to convince the guards that the heroes are innocent. They gather up Barthow (unless he was killed) and thank the heroes.

Unless the heroes mention that they have taken any of Thorin's possessions, the guards do not notice that anything is missing. If they do mention it, the guards order them to return the items. In this case, Thorin's friend Beryl seeks them out the following day. Beryl gives them Thorin's sword and the journal. "Please take these things and go to Nova Vaasa," Beryl asks. "I have lost the will to fight the things spoken of in that book, but Dr. Illhousen needs help. You tried to help Thorin. Maybe the best way to do that now is to finish what he was about to begin."

Whatever they decide, Beryl leaves them with the sword and the journal.

upposing
that I
should
have the
courage
To let a red
sword of
virtue

Plunge into my heart,
Letting to the weeds of the ground
My sinful blood,
What can you offer me?
A gardened castle?
A flowery kingdom?
What? A hope?
Then hence with your red sword of virtue.

—Stephen Crane

This adventure works best if the players are not aware that their characters are dreaming parts of it. To this end, the DM should not announce that he is running a Nightmare Lands adventure. "Dark Harvest" is designed for four to six heroes of 2nd to 4th level.

Overview

The adventure starts with a prophetic dream and a plea for help. The heroes are asked to recover a cart-load of supplies stolen by a band of savage monsters that have recently moved into the area. A strange fire wiped out everything the villagers had, and the stolen cart contains seeds and tools with which they can replant their crop before the season passes. It is a mundane task for heroes, but it seems simple and the villagers offer a reasonable reward.

The heroes can find the monsters' lair with ease. After a fight which ends with the monsters being driven off, the heroes easily retrieve the stolen supplies. The grateful villagers give the heroes all that was promised, and even treat them to a grand feast and celebration. All seems fine when the heroes move on. They are in a tavern a short time later when word comes that a terrible tragedy has befallen the village—the monsters they failed to destroy returned to destroy the village. The terrible nightmares caused by the fate of the villagers eventually attracts the attention of the macabre Ghost Dancer. The Ghost Dancer imprisons one of the heroes in a dreamscape and summons the rest to participate in a cruel and punishing nightmare. The heroes must gain enough mental fortitude to destroy the dream spawn overseeing the nightmare.

Note: If the heroes are on their way to Nova Vaasa to follow up on the situations presented in Adventure I, then they come across the villagers along the way.

Background

The village of Introsia has had a string of bad luck recently, and things are only getting worse. It started when a mysterious fire literally burned the village to the ground. The villagers' homes, their storehouse, and even their newly planted crop were all destroyed by the blaze.

The Introsians are a hardy people, however, and they quickly collected all their savings to purchase more seeds and tools with which to plant a new crop. One man, Haran Jamis, was sent to the nearest town to purchase these supplies. Only yesterday, tragedy struck again.

One of the villagers was out hunting when he witnessed Haran driving a cart toward Introsia. He started to wave when several creatures suddenly burst from the woodline and overtook the cart. Haran fought valiantly, but eventually the foul things struck him down. The hunter raced to his friend's aid, but by the time he got there the horrors were dragging the cart up into the hills. The hunter knew better than to chase the creatures alone, especially with his friend almost certainly dead already. He ran back to the village and told everyone what he had seen.

Those capable of fighting the monsters decided to band together the next day and do what they could to recover the seeds. The only experienced warrior among them, Irronauchs the dwarf, discouraged this course. He knew that the simple villagers, no matter how brave, would only be slaughtered by the monsters. He could not let more tragedy visit them.

As the heroes reach the ruined village, Irronauchs is about to mount his old warhorse and track down the creatures alone. He is old even for a dwarf, and probably no better at monster fighting these days than the simple villagers.

Introsia is in for a devastating winter if the missing seeds are not recovered. There are only a few days left in the planting season, so time is critical. They have little money to offer the heroes, but Irronauchs, who once served under a great lord in another land, offers a magical item of significant worth if they agree to recover the goods for him. He offers them a *warhammer +2*.

Part One: A Dream for Help

This adventure works best if the heroes happen upon the ruined village while traveling to some other place (such as when they are on their way to Nova Vaasa after Adventure I). Along the way, the heroes share a strange dream one night just before they reach the village. While the dream hints at the events in this adventure, it also provides omens of greater and deadlier adventures to come. Though the dream is important, it is not a vivid dream. The heroes receive nothing but mysterious clues from this dream of a strange assembly of people. Note that at some point during the night, all of the heroes fall asleep at least long enough to share this dream.

When the heroes are sleeping, read or paraphrase the following dream:

You and your companions stand in a charred field. The day is blustery, and dusk is fast approaching. For a moment, only your group is there. Then the wind begins to gain strength, and you and your friends move closer together.

That's when you see the first person. It's a peasant in a gray cloak. You don't see the slightest hint of color on this person. You notice that more peasants have appeared, and you suddenly find yourselves surrounded by a dense crowd. They seem to be pleading with you, but not one of them utters a sound. They press closer, reaching for you, seeking your help.

You spot the knight first, rising like a flag of brightness in the sea of gray around you. It's an ancient dwarf in battered plate mail, sitting atop an aging war-pony in similar garb. He holds out a hand, beseechingly …

The sailor appears next, stepping forward from between two gray-clad peasants. Water drips from his drenched clothes and hair, and seaweed clings to his body. When he tries to speak, to ask for help, a great wad of seaweed spills from his open mouth.

The woman catches your eye next. She wears the same gray cloak as the rest of the peasants, the same gray hood pulled up to protect her from the cutting wind. The hair that spills from that hood is rich and brown, however, and her hands, reaching toward you, are the color of life and vitality.

Finally, you notice a wild-eyed man carrying a length of barbed wire. He, too, seems to want your help. He holds his hands toward you, showing where the barbs have cut into his flesh.

You form a tighter circle as the crowd presses closer. "Help us," their eyes seem to say. "Help us," their outstretched arms implore you. You awaken with this image in your mind.

The dream ends as morning arrives, driving away the darkness for another day. The heroes should remember the feelings the dream inspired, but none of the actual details beyond a fleeting image or two. The players should get extra experience points at the end of the adventure if they play their characters in this manner.

The heroes wake up, break camp, and continue on their journey. The next stop: the village of Introsia.

Part Two: The Offer

The heroes reach Introsia just before nightfall and see villagers in despair. One of the forlorn villagers recognizes the look of the heroes. She sees them as a band of adventurers ready and willing to risk everything for treasure and excitement. She decides to ask for their help. Read:

It is nearly dusk on a blustery fall day. A cool wind whips at the edges of your cloak, as though trying to tug it to get your attention. You have been traveling for hours and are now on a winding country lane bordered by trees decorated with bright-colored leaves. The leaves must have recently changed color, and they give this dreary country lane an almost cheery look.

As you round a bend, you see that not all of the trees are so beautiful. Evidently, a terrible fire ravaged the forest here recently, for the air is still warm and the smell is fresh. Farther around the curve you see that the woods open into a large field that has also been destroyed by fire. Beside the field is the remains of a village, apparently also touched by the recent fire.

Scores of people, all dressed in gray cloaks, stand around an old dwarf in plate mail armor. The dwarf tries to mount an

armored pony, but he seems to be having some trouble climbing onto the animal. Some of the villagers watch dispassionately, but most are pleading with him, though you can't hear what they are saying from this distance.

If the heroes move closer they can hear some of the villagers urging the old dwarf, Irronauchs, not to go, though where exactly he is going is unclear. Whether or not the heroes are interested in becoming involved with the village's problem, one of the villagers approaches as the heroes pass. It is a young woman who looks just like the woman in their dream from the night before. Read:

One of the crowd happens to see you and turns toward you. The villager throws off her hood, revealing a beautiful young woman with rich, brown hair. She pushes her way through the crowd and heads directly toward you with her hands in the air.

"Good travelers! Please, stop for a moment!" she asks. "If those weapons you wear are for hire, we have need of you!"

If the heroes express any interest whatsoever, the woman, Renee, continues:

"We have been robbed! Only yesterday, a group of foul monsters ambushed our supply wagon. They killed the driver and then dragged the wagon into the hills," the young woman explains. "That wagon contained the tools and seeds that might repair this horrible damage you see around you. If you cannot retrieve these supplies for us, it is doubtful we will survive the winter."

The woman sweeps a hand toward the scorched field and forest. Obviously a fresh crop was destroyed in the fire, leaving the villagers without food or barter.

If the heroes want to help, continue with "Making a Deal" below. If they ignore the woman and continue on their journey, the woman calls after them. "Go, then, you cowards!" Renee cries. "Let the fate of Introsia be on your heads!" If they still want to leave, continue with "Grim News" on page 19.

Making a Deal

The heroes might simply agree to help the villagers out of the goodness of their hearts or some high sense of honor. However, they may ask for a more substantial reward. In this case, Renee scowls at them, but offers what is left of the village's food supplies (not much) and free rooms at the boarding house (one of the few buildings still standing in the village).

If this is not acceptable to the heroes, Irronauchs offers them his ancient warhammer. It is of excellent workmanship and has an enchantment of +2.

If the heroes agree to help the village before Irronauchs offers the weapon, he gives it to them later when they return with the cart.

Other Details About the Village

Irronauchs serves as the leader of Introsia, though he has no formal title. He was a veteran of many wars before becoming lost in the mists and eventually settling here. Over the years he has found the Introsians to be honest and peaceful people—qualities he appreciates after centuries of campaigning. He has defended his friends from many ravaging horrors, but his aging body is beginning to betray him.

Anyone who visits his home, which was only partially damaged by the fire, sees that Irronauchs was a knight in a religious order. Icons to a dwarf god fill the house. Besides holy icons, Irronauchs has four huge casks of Barovian ale secreted away in his basement. Outside, a stable holds two old but solid war ponies.

Irronauchs (male dwarf fighter, 9th level): AC 2 (plate mail and shield); MV 6; HD 9; hp 64; THACO 11; Dmg 1d4+3 (*warhammer +2*); SZ S (4-feet tall); ML Elite (13); AL LG
S 15, D 9, C 16, I 14, W 13, Ch 14

Renee Deprechkin runs the village's boarding house for her elderly parents. The fire never reached the boarding house or the few buildings around it. She is a very attractive and good-natured person, though the recent troubles have left their mark upon her. She tries to develop a friendship with at least one of the heroes. She is a central figure in the dreamscape nightmares to come.

Renee (female human, 0 level): AC 10; MV 12; hp 2; THACO 20; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SZ M (5-feet tall); ML Steady (11); AL NG

The villagers' homes are almost all made of timber taken from the nearby forest. Most of the houses were at least partially damaged in the fire, and at least 40% of them were totally destroyed. If the heroes take the time to look around, it becomes evident that the villagers are not warriors and that they won't last through the winter without a healthy crop to sustain them.

The villagers all treat the heroes with respect and honor. In addition, they do their best to offer the heroes whatever meager amounts of food and wealth they still possess in an effort to better insure the heroes' assistance.

The Details

Irronauchs and Renee fill the heroes in on the information presented in "Background" on page 9. The old dwarf can even point the way toward the hills, showing the direction the monsters went. As he didn't see the creatures, Irronauchs can't tell them what to be ready for. "In this land," the dwarf cautions, "I'd be ready for anything."

From here, the heroes continue with Part Three: Monster Hunt.

Part Three: Monster Hunt

Now the heroes must trek into the hills and find the lair of the monsters. What they find, however, may be more than they bargained for. Irronauchs and Grald, the villager who witnessed the attack, lead the heroes to the place where the cart and driver were attacked.

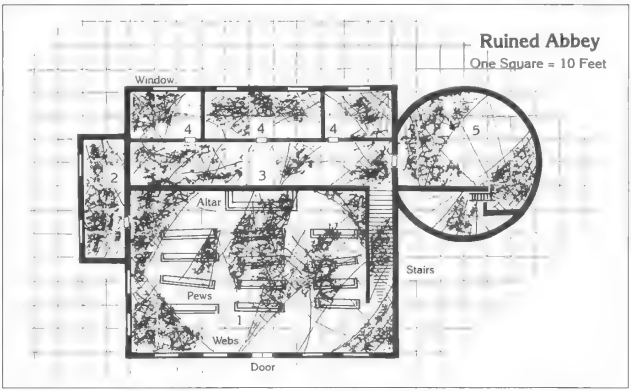
The location of the attack is a perfect site for an ambush. The thick forest along either side of the road can hide an army, and seeing what's up ahead is limited to the next bend in the road.

Grald, the hunter who witnessed the attack, points to a spot on the road and says, "There's where Jamis fell. Then those things threw him into the cart and dragged him and it into the hills. They were horrible beasts—huge things with sharp fangs and long arms ending in spindly claws."

If any of the heroes has ever fought an ettercap, he can identify the creature from Grald's description if he makes a successful Intelligence check. Otherwise, Grald has just described every monster that ever crawled out of a deep, dark cave to ravage the land.

The Trail

Tracking the cart is relatively easy. A hero who makes a successful tracking proficiency roll can follow the trail to the ruined abbey where the monsters make their lair. If the roll is made by 4 or more, the hero also discerns that there were at least three attackers. Without the tracking skill, the trail is still easy to follow. It can be picked up by any hero who makes a Wisdom check with a –2 penalty. Neither villager will accompany the heroes any farther.



When the heroes approach the ruins, read the following:

> The tracks lead up a series of steep hills. It is easy to follow them—the thick forest means that the monsters could only take the cart up the old trail that you're on now. After 20 minutes of cautious travel, you finally reach the crest of the hill. Before you sits an old abbey partially in ruins. Dark green vines have overgrown the facade. Some have even wormed into the stone here and there and caused it to crumble even more. Thick spider webs hang from the open doorway and windows. The cart sits intact near the doorway, but it is empty.

There are several ways into the abbey. The front door is the most obvious path, but a hero could climb through any of the windows as well. All openings except for the door are completely covered with thick webs. These need to be burned or cut before the openings they cover can be used.

Any hero foolish enough to get entangled in the webs instantly draws the attention of 1d4 large spiders (see "Complications," page 16).

The Ruined Abbey

The bags of seeds and tools the heroes are looking for can be found on the lower level of the abbey. Unfortunately, so can the ettercaps who stole them. The ettercaps notice the heroes as they approach the ruins, so they are ready to use the traps that are set in their lair.

If the heroes decide to explore the upper level, they can discover that there are more of these creatures than just the three they find on the lower level.

The locations shown on the map of the ruined abbey are described below.

1. Worship Chamber: This abbey was once home to a lawful neutral religious sect. The sect never expected to have more than a score of worshippers, so this chamber isn't very large. There are eight stone pews laid out in two rows, but most have been busted or broken. An altar against the far wall is covered with spider webs and dust.

Hanging from the crumbling staircase, from the balcony, and any other vantage point are gigantic spider webs. Spiders the size of a man's hand and larger scurry along the webs as well as from piles of debris on the floor. Their multifaceted eyes stare at the heroes hungrily. The spiders will not attack such large prey, but they do wait patiently in case someone becomes entangled in one of their webs.

Lying beneath the staircase is the stolen loot: eight large bags of seeds, hoes, rakes, and other tools obviously taken from the cart. Strewn nearby are a knife, a leather belt, a pouch with 14 silver coins, and the corpse of Haran Jamis. The body has been gnawed on by something other than spiders.

2. Ettercap Lair: Three horrible ettercaps live in this filthy room. Three nests fill this room, consisting of webs, leaves, and rotting moss. By day, the ettercaps usually putter about the abbey setting traps with the webs produced by the spiders. In the evening, they venture into the forests to hunt for prey. The ettercaps are not here when the heroes arrive. Instead, they are scattered about the abbey, waiting to trigger the traps.

Ettercaps (3): Int Low (7); AC 6; MV 12; HD 5; hp 25, 20, 14; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d8; SA poison (save vs. poison or die within 1d4 rounds); SD traps; SZ M (6-feet tall); ML Elite (13); XP 650

Complications
The ettercaps have created several traps in their lair to protect them from intruders. Any of the creatures can sacrifice its attacks for the round to trigger one of these pre-set traps. When the ettercaps pull on certain strands of spider web, a netlike web falls on a randomly chosen hero unless that hero makes a saving throw vs. breath weapons. If the targeted hero fails the save, the web net entangles him. An entangled hero can break free in a number of rounds equal to his Strength score subtracted from 19. (A hero with a Strength of 15 needs 4 rounds to free himself; 19 – 15 = 4.) If the hero has a readily available dagger or other small cutting tool, he can free himself in 1d4+1 rounds. Another hero can cut him loose in 1d2+1 rounds.

If a hero tries to push through a web-covered window or is somehow knocked into the webs that adorn the interior of the abbey, they become entangled in the webs, as described above. If a hero is entangled in these webs, 1d4 large spiders rush out of hiding to attack him.

Anyone attacking an entangled hero receives a +4 bonus to his attack roll, and an entangled hero loses all Dexterity-based adjustments to Armor Class.

Large Spiders: Int Non- (0); AC 8; MV 6, Wb 15; HD 1+1; THAC0 19; # AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (Type A, onset 15 minutes, save vs. poison at +2 for no damage, failure indicates that the victim takes 15 points of damage); SZ S (2-feet diameter); ML Unsteady (7); AL N; XP 175

3. Balcony: The balcony literally drips with spider webs. A hero who makes an Intelligence check with a –3 penalty notices that the staircase up to the balcony appears weak.

If anyone walks up the staircase without staying beside the wall, roll 1d6. On a 1 or a 2, the outer portion of the staircase collapses. The hero suffers 2d6 points of damage and becomes entangled in webs as he falls. 1d4 spiders immediately rush in for the kill.

4. Priest Chambers: The priests who served this abbey once lived in these simple chambers. Now the rest of the ettercaps live here. The heroes discover more of the strange nests built out of webs, rotting leaves, and tangles of moss. There are eight of these nests here, one for each of the vile creatures. These ettercaps are currently far off in the woods hunting for food. They won't return at this point in the adventure, and the heroes won't be able to track them in the deeper woods.

5. Conservatory: The priests used to work in the top floor of this tower. Here they studied ancient texts dedicated to their religion. Most of their desks and benches have been destroyed, and the texts are rotted and crumbling.

The lower floor of the conservatory was once the head priest's chamber. All of the furniture is ruined, and several inches of rain water covers the floor. Anyone who wades into this area is attacked by a pack of giant rats.

Giant Rats (2d4): Int Semi- (3); AC 7; MV 12, Sw 6; HD 1/2; THAC0 20; # AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA cause disease (5% chance); SZ S (2-feet long); ML Unsteady (5); XP 15

Defeating the Ettercaps

Eventually the three ettercaps at the abbey should be defeated and the stolen goods collected. One ettercap tries to escape if the other two are killed. Even if it doesn't get away, when the rest of the creatures return from hunting they'll suspect the villagers of this attack on the abbey. The heroes, however, have accomplished their goal.

Part Four: Celebration

The Introsians are ecstatic when they hear the news that the heroes have recovered their seeds. Regardless of the time or the weather, the villagers insist that they be allowed to throw a celebration feast in honor of the heroes. But first, they have to learn that a celebration is actually called for. Read:

> Irronauchs, Renee, Grald, and a few other villagers are waiting in the streets of Introsia when you return. You can sense their anxiousness as they wait for you to tell them what happened. For a few moments, everything is quiet. Then Renee asks, "Did you recover the seeds?"

If the heroes show the bags of seeds or answer that their mission was successful, the villagers become animated for the first time since the heroes arrived. The villagers cheer and laugh, some begin to dance, and others appear to find out what all the commotion is about. Before the villagers get too out of hand, Irronauchs speaks up. Read:

> "The heroes have saved us from what would have otherwise been a bleak and most likely deadly winter," Irronauchs proclaims, his strong, deep voice instantly silencing the rest of the villagers. "In addition to the meager reward we offered, I propose we do something else for our new friends. I propose we prepare a feast and celebrate this miraculous turn of events! What say you, people of Introsia?"
>
> "Aye!" the villagers shout as one, "A feast for the heroes!"
>
> "And dancing," Renee adds quickly, a smile lighting up her face. "The time has come to dance again! Let music fill the streets of Introsia this night!"

Before the heroes can protest, the villagers let out another collective cry of joy and excitement, then everyone starts rushing around to make preparations. Within minutes, the village's meager supplies are spread out and work commences on creating a good and hearty feast with the ingredients on hand. Hidden stores of ale and wine are happily revealed, and villagers with musical talent break out their instruments. Soon the happy sounds of song and activity fill the air, mixing with the smells of food cooking over great fires.

A village youth boldly asks the heroes to tell the tale of their adventure, and other villagers quickly add their own requests. One of the heroes should be persuaded to regale the crowd with his or her version of the battle with the ettercaps. Experience points should be awarded for embellishment and dramatic presentation; from 15 to 120 XP, depending on how entertaining the player is and how well he or she role-plays telling the story.

The rest of this scene is an exercise in role-playing designed to help the characters remember these poor but friendly villagers. Example encounters are presented below, but the DM is encouraged to add more scenes and expand on the encounters for as long as the celebration remains entertaining.

If the Heroes Don't Want to Stay

If the heroes try to leave before the celebration commences, Irronauchs approaches them. Read:

> "You wouldn't be thinking of leaving?" the ancient dwarf asks. He appears a bit more casual, as he has removed the ornate plate mail and donned a simple tunic and gray pants. "Stay until morning and let us show you our gratitude. The company's good and the food's hot. Besides, the road you're traveling isn't safe after the sun goes down."

The dwarf tries to persuade the heroes to stay. He tells them how good Alira's honey meat is, and that the ale is from his own private stock. He leans close to the hero to whom Renee has been paying the most attention and says with a wink, "Renee dances with wild abandon, my friend. She's been known to make even this old heart race when she sways to the music, if you know what I mean."

If they ask what Irronauchs means about the road, he says, "Bandits and wild animals prowl the road at night, hunting for prey that's too stupid or too brave to know any better."

If the heroes can't be persuaded to remain, Irronauchs reluctantly wishes them well and hands them a pack. In the pack is the *warhammer +2* he promised them. "Remember us, good friends," he says as they head off, "for we're going to remember you."

Encounters at the Celebration

Loud, bouncy music makes even the stoic Irronauchs tap his foot. Hot, filling food spills over the tops of the serving bowls. Great bonfires provide cheery light once the sun goes down. Even Irronauchs' ale seems to flow in limitless quantities from the large barrels positioned near the serving tables. This is the best feast the village has ever thrown, and one of the happiest and friendliest the heroes have ever attended.

A few sample encounters follow to help make this celebration truly memorable. Run them in any order, or overlap a few to get across the hectic pace and chaotic good time that shapes this night of merriment.

Food Tasting. Every woman in the village has prepared a special dish for the celebration, and every woman wants the guests of honor—the heroes—to sample their fare. They approach one at a time, either shyly or boldly, carrying a bowl or platter from which they expect one or more of the heroes to taste. Of course, each woman expects to be praised for the quality of her dish. The single women have other motives; they hope to snag husbands from among these brave adventurers, and many of them believe that the way to a hero's heart is through his stomach.

Determine if a woman is bold or shy by rolling 1d6: 1–3, shy; 4–6, bold. When a woman wanders over to a hero, she strikes up a conversation (if she's bold) or quietly offers a bowl of her special dish (if she's shy).

Roll 1d6 to determine the quality of the food in question. On a roll of 1, the food is so bad that the hero must make a Constitution check to keep it down. On a roll of 6, the food is so good that the hero must make a Wisdom check to keep from eating the whole bowl. The numbers 2 to 5 indicate a quality somewhere between the two extremes.

If a hero shows bad form and insults any of the women, this could lead to either comical or serious role-playing situations. Insulting a bold woman, for example, results in the woman dumping her food over the hero's head. A shy woman, however, runs away in tears.

Renee's Attention. One of the heroes receives Renee's attention during the celebration. It should be the same character who she tried to befriend when the heroes first arrived in the village. This friendship is very important to the rest of this adventure, so it becomes vital that one of the heroes should take a liking to the young woman. This friendship could be merely platonic, or it could take on romantic overtones if the DM and player want to develop it that way.

Renee spends large portions of the celebration talking to the hero, dancing with him, bringing him food and drink, and generally being extremely friendly. She doesn't have any ulterior motives; she genuinely likes the hero and wants to get to know him better.

If the relationship progresses along a romantic path, Renee tries to make time to

spend some quiet moments alone with the hero before the night ends. She won't agree to follow him when he leaves, at least not for the immediate future. She's committed to helping to rebuild the village and turning her parents' boarding house into a highly regarded inn. Renee will admit to having feelings—even *strong* feelings—for the hero. "I'll be here when you want to visit again," she says, pressing a gold earring into the hero's hand. It is a plain gold hoop, as beautiful as it is simple. "Remember me," she whispers, brushing a light kiss across his lips.

The Reward. If the heroes agreed to help the village for room and board, Renee leaps atop a table a few hours after dark and shouts for everyone's attention. Read:

> "Let's hear it for this brave band of adventurers," Renee shouts as a wide smile stretches across her pretty face. "We haven't offered them much more than this feast, our friendship, and our gratitude, but we hope you realize what your efforts mean to us. Now, we have one other reward to bestow upon you." With a contagious laugh, Renee tosses keys to you. "Those open doors in my parents' boarding house. The rooms are small but comfortable, and you may stay free of charge for as long as you like. Now, who wants another mug of Irronauchs' ale?"

If the heroes held out for Irronauchs' offer, continue with the read-aloud below before Renee calls for the party to resume. If the heroes opted to help just for room and board, then Irronauchs makes a gift of the magical warhammer. In either case, read or paraphrase the following after Renee gives her speech.

> "In my younger days, this weapon served me well," Irronauchs says as he draws forth an ornate warhammer. "It helped me battle evil and right wrongs, but that was a long time ago. My time has passed, but this weapon is still in its prime. I want it to carry on the fight. For that reason, I'm giving it to these brave adventurers. May it serve you as well as it served me."

Irronauchs doesn't present the weapon to any single member of the group, but instead gives it to all of the heroes in general. He believes that the group knows who can make the best use of the *warhammer +2*. It's better if they make that decision.

Grald's Gift. Before the celebration ends, Grald approaches one of the heroes. He selects the hero who has shown the most interest in hunting and tracking, or who has befriended the hunter in some way. For months he has been conditioning and treating a fine piece of hardwood. He recently turned the hardwood into a long bow of excellent craftsmanship. This bow has been specially made to take advantage of a bowman's strength: damage bonuses due to the bowman's Strength score can be applied to damage inflicted by the bow. The bow has a flaw, however. A minute crack runs through the center of the wood. On a natural attack roll of 1, have the player make a second 1d20 roll. If that also comes up as a 1, the hardwood cracks and the bow is ruined.

Part Five: Grim News

The heroes leave Introsia the morning after the celebration (or sooner if the heroes were in a real hurry). After a day of travel, the group reaches a roadside inn with an attached tavern where they can rest for the night. Before they resume their journey the following day, they receive grim news.

Arrival

The heroes reach the roadside inn just as dusk spreads over the land. The inn looks warm and inviting, and the smells wafting from the attached tavern might remind them of the feast from the previous night. Read:

> The tavern is a busy place, full of wonderful smells and cheerful conversation. A group of soldiers occupies three tables in the far corner. They talk and laugh between mouthfuls of steaming stew and hot bread. At a table near the door, three hunters discuss techniques for stalking deer as they empty a pitcher of ale. Other people in the large common room include a variety of travelers: merchants, adventurers, and others between destinations.

The heroes can get food, drink, and rooms for the night if they want. If they decide to leave after a short visit, one of the soldiers speaks up. "I wouldn't advise traveling at night," the soldier calls in a friendly voice. "The road isn't safe in the dark." One of the serving maids adds, "We're all friendly here, and the rooms upstairs are cheap and comfortable."

If the heroes do decide to move on before morning, they'll have to hear the grim news sometime during the next day. Otherwise, the next important scene takes place shortly after the heroes wake up.

Bearer of Bad Tidings

The morning brings bad news from Introsia. After the heroes wake up, when they come downstairs they're on hand for the arrival of another traveler from the nearby village. This traveler is someone the heroes know—Grald the Hunter. Read:

> The door that leads from the common room to outside swings open and a dusty, exhausted figure stumbles into the tavern. You recognize the man immediately, though he wasn't in such bad shape when last you saw him. It's Grald, the hunter from Introsia who gave you the hardwood long bow. He notices you as one of the serving maids rushes over to help him. "I'm sorry," he says as you notice the cuts and bruises on his face and neck. "I couldn't help them. I couldn't help any of them."
>
> "Talk sense, man," the innkeeper says, handing Grald a mug of hot tea. "Who couldn't you help? And what in pity's name happened to you?"
>
> Grald takes a big swallow from the mug, coughs, wipes a bloody sleeve across his lips, and continues. "The ettercaps," he says, looking at you with tear-filled eyes, "there must have been more of those things out there. They struck last night, right after the sun went down. They killed everyone, even Irronauchs and Renee. I fought as best I could, even took one of the monsters down, but in the end I only had two choices—run or die. Forgive me, but I ran. When I think about poor Renee, how they set fire to the boarding house while she was still inside, it just makes me sick. I should have let them kill me, too."

This news should be devastating to the heroes, especially to the hero who had become Renee's friend. In fact, this grim news is the hero's *triggering event* for the nightmares to come. Images of Renee—both as the hero remembers her and as the hunter described her last moments of life—should haunt the hero throughout the day. And when night comes, so will the nightmares. Before then, the heroes should try to help Grald and learn the rest of his story.

Grald eventually explains that a large band of ettercaps attacked the village as soon as it grew dark. The monsters slaughtered everyone, though villagers like Grald and Irronauchs tried to fight back. Though ettercaps normally don't employ fire, the leader of this unusual pack learned the benefits of fire long ago. The ettercap leader set fire to the village the first time, and he used fire again in this revenge-motivated attack.

Once the hunter realized that to keep fighting would lead to his own death, he ran. He didn't stop running until morning, when he literally ran into the soldiers who were in the inn the night before. The soldiers told Grald they would head to Introsia and deal with the ettercaps, then they pointed him toward the roadside inn.

The heroes might want to go back to Introsia themselves, but the innkeeper tells them that there's nothing for them to do there. "Captain Falog's men are the best around," the innkeeper says. "They'll track down those monsters and bury the dead." If the heroes insist, they arrive back in the village after the soldiers have finished taking care of the situation. The dead have been buried and the ettercaps were destroyed. There were no survivors beyond Grald. The few buildings that were still standing during the heroes' last visit are now nothing more than smoldering ruins.

Part Six: The Nightmares Begin

When night arrives and the hero who befriended Renee finally gives in to exhaustive sleep, he experiences the first nightmare inspired by the triggering event. Consequently, this nightmare attracts the attention of the Ghost Dancer, a member of the Nightmare Court, and the dreamer becomes an unwitting guest in the Nightmare Lands.

You stand in the front room of Renee's boarding house. You're alone, and the place is totally silent. After a few moments, you notice an eerie glow coming through the front window. Outside, a rolling fog fills the village street. It appears that the particles of moisture that make up the fog are luminescent, for while the fog glows the rest of the night is dark.

You stare into the fog for a few moments, until the first scream shatters the quiet night. Then more voices join the first, and the night air sings with shouts of pain and screams of terror instead of the chirping of crickets and the croaking of frogs. You try to move, but your feet seem to be stuck to the floor. You're not in the boarding house anymore—now you're standing in the roadside inn. The window, however, still looks upon a street in Introsia.

"Don't mind the screams, friend," the innkeeper says as he hands you a mug. "It's only the dying villagers. No need to worry. You'll be warm and safe in here."

Still unable to move, you see something coming down the street. It parts the glowing fog as it gets closer, and you see that it's a figure in a hooded cloak. Waves of brown hair spill from the hood, and though you can't see her face, you know that it's Renee. She floats over the street, walking not on the ground but upon the glowing pillows of fog. When she gets to a point just outside the window, she turns to face you. The screams in the night are louder now, and you can hear other noises you can't quite identify—ripping noises, crackling noises.

Renee's hood falls away, revealing not the beautiful woman you remember but a face that has been badly burned. "Why didn't you kill them all?" Renee asks as her cloak bursts into flame. "Why did you let them do this to us again?" You awaken, but Renee's image remains burned in your mind.

This vivid nightmare requires the hero to make a system shock roll with a –25% penalty upon awaking. This nightmare lingers into the waking world even if the hero makes the roll; if the roll fails, he makes all die rolls for the next 24 hours with a –1 penalty.

The hero can share his dream with the rest of the group if he wants, or he can keep it to himself. In either case, he looks like he slept badly—he has a haggard look, and dark circles can be seen beneath his eyes. In addition, because this nightmare was caught in the Nightmare Court's Web of Dreams, the hero temporarily loses 1 point of Intelligence. (See page 54 in *The Rules of Dreams and Nightmares*.)

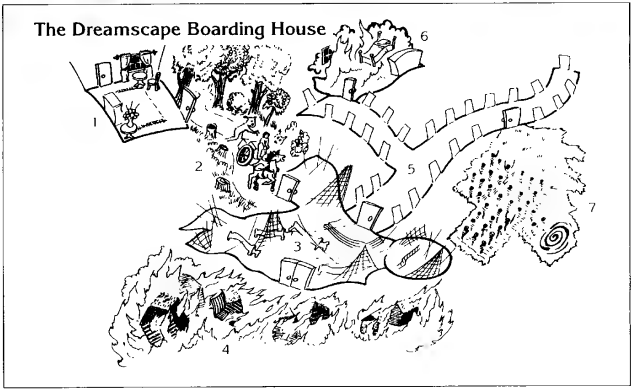
How the rest of the day plays out is up to DMs and their players. If this adventure followed Adventure I, then the heroes probably resume their journey to Nova Vaasa. In any case, the next scene occurs when night again claims the land and all of the heroes go to sleep. Then they enter a dreamscape for the first time—a dreamscape controlled by the Nightmare Court.

Part Seven: The Burning Dreamscape

When the heroes go to sleep, the following events occur immediately:

- The hero who had the nightmare about the village and Renee has his dream-self drawn into a dreamscape in the Nightmare Lands, where he becomes a dream seed;
- The Ghost Dancer's minion, a shadow morph, uses the summon power to pull the rest of the heroes into the dreamscape;
- The dream seed's inner peace number is determined.

To determine the dream seed's inner peace number, add the following numbers: dream seed's level +2; dream seed's current



Intelligence score; one-half of the Ghost Dancer's Hit Dice (12 ÷ 2 = 6), rounded down.

Example: If the dream seed is a 4th-level warrior with a current Intelligence score of 13 (remember it was reduced by 1 point due to the Web of Dreams), then the formula becomes 4 + 2 + 13 + 6 = 25. In this case, the inner peace number would be 25.

The Ghost Dancer's overseer in this dreamscape, a shadow morph, can't be truly defeated until after the dream seed increases his *mental fortitude rating* to 25 or more. The dream seed begins with a mental fortitude rating equal to the number of other heroes in his group; the cost of the summon power is 1 mental fortitude point per summoned dreamer, and these points are immediately added to the dream seed's mental fortitude rating. See page 26 in *The Rules of Dreams and Nightmares* for full details on mental fortitude.

The scenes in the dreamscape continue night after night until the dream seed builds up the mental fortitude needed to break free of the Nightmare Court's hold. Each night, the rest of the heroes' dream-selves are also summoned to participate.

To determine how many dream scenes will occur during a given night, the DM secretly rolls 1d6+2. This means that from 3 to 8 dream scenes will play out before a dream seed wakes up. When the dream seed wakes up, the other dreamers are expelled from the dreamscape and they wake up, too.

The map of the Dreamscape Boarding House and the encounters tied to it present a number of courses for each night of dream scenes. Each encounter has a number of alternative scenes to help make the nightmares slightly different each time they play out. The DM is encouraged to add his own twists and minor scenes to those presented here.

As these nightmares take a toll on the dream seed and his companions, the group's rate of travel will steadily decline as each night of fitful

rest passes. In addition, the other dreamers and even the dream-seed should have only vague memories of the events that occur each night while they sleep.

The Overseer

The overseer in this dreamscape is a lesser dream spawn, a shadow morph loyal to the Ghost Dancer. This mean-spirited creature tries to keep the dreamscape focused on the dream seed's triggering event (the destruction of Introsia and the death of Renee), but every once in a while it lets a scene tied directly to the Ghost Dancer intrude on the proceedings.

The overseer takes a prominent role in every dream scene. It usually plays the monster or villain of the drama, as described in the encounters below. It can be defeated in each scene, but it returns in the next at full strength until the dream seed achieves inner peace (his mental fortitude rating equals or exceeds the inner peace number for this dreamscape). After the dream seed achieves inner peace, damage inflicted upon the overseer doesn't simply disappear when the dream scene ends. With inner peace attained, the overseer can be destroyed and the dream seed set free.

Shadow Morph: Int Very (11); AC 4; MV 12; HD 5; hp 24; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8 (claws); SA horror (screech; everyone who sees morph's natural form saves vs. spell at –2 or is frozen in fear for 1d6+1 rounds; this fear allows the morph to regenerate 1 hp per round); SD +2 weapon or better to hit; SZ M (5-feet tall); ML Elite (13); AL LE

Dreamscape Encounters

When the nightmares begin each night, the dream seed starts out alone in the front room of Renee's boarding house. This beginning is the same as the beginning of the nightmare presented in Part 6 (page 21). A few moments later, the dream-selves of the summoned heroes arrive. The encounters that follow are presented with variations so that the scenes can play out differently each night.

Only the dream seed can open the doors; when a door opens, the entire scene shifts around the heroes to become the new location—as though a page were turned or the world changed in the blink of an eye.

Refer to the map of the Dreamscape Boarding House when using these encounters.

1. The Boarding House Lobby. This large room features couches and chairs, a desk, a thick carpet, and plush drapes. The front wall consists of a door to the street outside and a large window that look into the night. (Whenever the heroes arrive here it is night.) A staircase twists up into darkness, and a second door leads (presumably) deeper into the boarding house. Each night's series of dream scenes begins here.

A. Anticipation. The first night, all that occurs in this location are events that help increase the fear gnawing at the dream seed and his companions. The fog rolls in moments after everyone arrives. It fills the street outside, presses at the window glass, and even sends exploratory tendrils of glowing vapor under the door. The screams start next. They're far off initially, but they get louder and closer as tense moments pass by. Other noises fill the night; ripping sounds and the crackle of fire, high pitched shrieks, chittering, and the strange sound of far-away music. The latter comes from the Theater Macabre, where the Ghost Dancer performs her morose ballet.

As soon as the dream seed opens either door or any dream-self climbs the stairs into darkness, this scene ends.

B. Accusation. The second time this dream scene plays out, everything occurs as it did

before except the figure of Renee appears in the street outside the window. She behaves as she did in the earlier nightmare—to a point.

This time, instead of waking up after Renee accuses the dream seed and the other heroes of failing the village, the nightmare continues. A huge ettercap emerges from the fog and attacks Renee in front of the heroes. To get out of this dream scene, the heroes must defeat the huge ettercap, who is really the overseer of this dreamscape. When the ettercap is defeated (or the dream seed wakes up through other means), this scene ends.

Huge Ettercap: Int Low (7); AC 6; MV 12; HD 6; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8+2 (claws and bite); SA poison (when bitten, save vs. poison or die within 1d4 rounds; SD nil; SZ L (7-feet tall); ML Elite (13); AL NE

C. Audience. While every nightmare begins in the boarding house lobby, sometimes this dream scene momentarily shifts to the Theater of the Macabre. The dream seed and his companions find themselves sitting in the audience, facing an elaborate stage. An unseen orchestra tunes its instruments, and the packed house waits in silent anticipation for the start of the show. If the dreamers look around, they see that the audience consists of corpses in varying states of decay. These corpses, however, are as animate and mobile as the dreamers themselves. They're not *dead*—they're *undead*!

The undead are all villagers from Introsia, people the heroes recognize from the celebration a few nights ago. Whatever performance this grisly audience is waiting for doesn't begin. Slowly, however, every rotting or burned head turns to stare accusingly at the heroes. This scene ends as the house lights turn off and the theater is plunged into total darkness.

2. The Forest Road. The next dream scene takes place on a road that winds its way through the forest near Introsia. It builds upon the dream seed's memories of Grald's tale of the attack on the cart full of seeds and supplies, though the overseer does its best to provide a few frightening twists and surprises. The road isn't very wide, and the trees press so close together that there aren't any paths into the forest. One end of the road leads back to the boarding house lobby, while the other leads to the next dream scene.

A. Attack. The heroes arrive in this dream scene just as three ettercaps leap out of the forest to attack a horse-drawn cart and the rider guiding it. Use the ettercap statistics on page 15 for two of these monsters; the third is the huge ettercap from Scene 1B. No matter how this scene plays out, the driver always dies. This scene ends when the huge ettercap is defeated.

B. Ambush. When the heroes enter this dream scene a second time, the dream seed winds up as the driver and the other dreamers are his passengers aboard the horse-drawn cart. Build the anticipation of the ambush they know is coming but that they're unable to stop. The dream seed should be particularly nervous, as the driver is destined to die. After what feels like hours pass as the cart slowly travels the forest road, the ambush is sprung. Web nets fall out of the trees and the ettercaps attack with wild abandon. This scene ends with either the defeat of the ettercaps or the "death" of the dream seed (everyone wakes up).

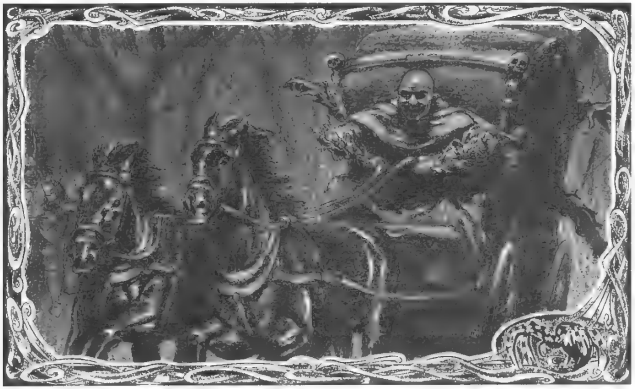
Dream Powers of the Overseer
The Ghost Dancer has given her overseer the following dream powers to employ against the dream seed and his companions: frustration, muddle, nightmare, and summon. The overseer has 5 mental fortitude points to spend in any given dream scene.

C. Message. The third time this scene plays out, the heroes are standing beside the road. They can hear pounding hooves and the rumble of turning wheels in the distance. A carriage drawn by two black stallions rushes toward the heroes.

Standing next to the dream seed is a large man in a fine suit. He has a thick beard and thick spectacles, and he is more than a little overweight. He turns his head to look at the dream seed, then shouts to be heard over the approaching carriage. "I'm Dr. Illhousen," the man says in a friendly, albeit loud, voice. "I understand you have my journal. Please return it to me as soon as you are able."

The carriage rumbles past the heroes at this point. It's a huge conveyance with a dark interior that's drawn by two giant black horses. Inside the wagon, barely visible through the small windows, shadowy shapes writhe and crawl. If any of the heroes try to get a closer look inside, have them make fear checks. A bald monk in simple robes sits atop the carriage, handling the reins and whipping the horses with wild abandon. If the heroes take a close look at the monk, they notice that his arms are covered by vines and twisting roots that seem to grow right out of his pale flesh. The noise produced by the extreme closeness of the horses and the carriage is deafening and frightening, but after a brief moment it disappears down the road. Dr. Illhousen is also gone, and then the scene shifts to the next part of the nightmare.

3. The Ruined Abbey. This scene places the heroes back in the ettercap's lair. Three exits lead out of this scene: back to the forest road (scene 2), on to an Introsia engulfed by fire (scene 4), or to another portion of the boarding house (scene 5). Use the map of the ruined abbey on page 14 to describe the scene, but feel free to add nightmare touches and surreal qualities to change it from the waking world.



A. Prisoners. The dream seed and his companions open this scene in total darkness. They can't see anything, but their other senses are working. The heroes feel the disturbingly light touch of cobwebs brushing against their faces, arms, and heads. They also feel heavy burlap sacks beneath them, and the small, hard seeds shifting around inside the sacks.

The heroes are tied up in a dark corner of the ruined abbey. It's night, and there are no lights to dispel this thick darkness. The object of this scene is to escape from the ropes that bind them while not giving in to the revulsion of spiders crawling over exposed flesh or the seeds moving like beetles beneath them.

Each hero needs to make a successful Dexterity check with a –5 penalty to slip free of the ropes, or a successful Strength check with a –3 penalty to break the ropes. Each hero gets to make one check. Those who succeed can stumble out of the cramped space. Those who fail must make madness checks as thousands of tiny spiders drop on them and crawl into their clothing, their mouths, and their ears.

Free heroes can help the others free themselves after the madness checks have been made. A moment after that, the entire place shakes as though caught in an earthquake and the scene ends.

B. Spider Monster. If the heroes return to this scene, they find themselves in the ruined abbey just as dusk spreads over the land. Just enough light remains to let them see where they are, but not enough to obliterate the long, deep shadows. A huge spider web stretches across the interior of the ruined abbey. Caught in the center of the web is Renee, who appears as beautiful as the day the heroes first set eyes upon her.

"Help me," Renee calls, struggling against the thick, sticky web. "Don't fail me again."

Before the heroes can move to free her, they spot the monster of this particular nightmare. It's a giant spider that's more than 10 feet around, with thick black legs and a hairy black body. Its head is the head and torso of a huge ettercap, and it looks as evil as it does intelligent. This spider, needless to say, is the overseer's current form.

To end this dream scene, the heroes must defeat the spider monster. Its first attack is targeted at Renee, who it kills in front of the heroes by piercing her with one sharp-clawed leg. When this occurs, the dream seed must make a horror check.

Spider Monster: Int Very (11); AC 2; MV 15; HD 7; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d10/1d10/1d12 (claws and bite); SA poison (if bitten, save vs. poison or die in 2 rounds); SZ L (10-feet diameter); ML Elite (13); AL LE

4. Introsia Burning. The heroes appear in the middle of a field outside the village of Introsia. A fire rages all around them. Intense heat rolls out of the fire in blistering waves, and the noise of the crackling flames is deafening. This dream scene has only one exit; it leads back to the ruined abbey.

A. Save the Crops. The first time the heroes experience this nightmare, give them a few moments to avoid the flames and thick smoke. Just being in the middle of the fire (and there doesn't seem to be anything but fire for as far as they can run or see), the heroes suffer 1d4 points of damage every round from the intense heat. In addition, for every round the heroes remaining standing, they must make Constitution checks to avoid being overcome by smoke. A failed Constitution check causes a hero to breathe in searing smoke: such a hero suffers 1d8 points of damage. To avoid the smoke hazard, a hero needs to crawl along the ground, under the rising smoke.

After a few rounds of dealing with the immediate situation, the heroes hear cries for help. The source isn't villagers as the heroes might expect. The cries for help come from the crops, which take on humanlike faces in this dream. Stalks of corn call for help. Rows of wheat scream in terror as the flames lick at their blades. How the heroes respond should be interesting, as they can't just pull a stalk of corn to safety. If a hero does try to pull a plant out of the ground, the plant screams, "Murderer!" and shouts in pain. When the roots pull free from the ground, blood spurts in every direction—human blood, not sap.

Finally, as if these tests weren't enough, the overseer arrives. This time, the shadow morph takes the form of the fire itself. It appears as a walking pillar of fire, standing about seven-feet tall, with rough versions of arms and legs crackling from the main body. It gleefully sets fire to the screaming plants, attacking the heroes only if they attempt to interfere.

This scene ends when the dream seed "dies" or when the overseer is defeated.

Fire Monster: Int Very (11); AC 3; MV 15; HD 6; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (fiery fists); SA fire (if hit, target must save vs. breath weapon or burst into flames; flames inflict 1d6 points of damage per round); SZ L (7-feet tall); ML Elite (13); AL LE

B. Save the Village Children. The scene plays out just like Scene 4A with one major difference—it isn't crops that need to be saved, it's the children from the village. What's worse, the children seem to grow like crops, their feet stuck in the soil like roots. When the fire monster appears, the situation should become much more tense than it was when only crops were being threatened by the flames.

5. Hall of Doors. This dream scene once again places the heroes in the boarding house. They appear in a long hall whose ends are cloaked in darkness. Doors line each side of the hall, though only two of the doors can be

opened (and even they can only be opened by the dream seed). To determine if a door is one of the two that the dream seed can open, roll 1d6 each time the dream seed tries a door. On a roll of 1, the door swings open and the scene shifts to either Scene 6 or Scene 7.

As the heroes walk down this dark, gloomy hall, they can hear terrible noises behind the doors. At one door, something scratches pitifully in an attempt to escape. At another door, they hear a child crying. Behind a third door, they hear Renee begging for her life as an ettercap laughs its chittering laugh.

Sounds from the previous dream scenes can be heard behind other doors. One door even hides the dream seed's memories of the roadside inn, sounds of happiness and good cheer that ring hollow next to the sounds behind the adjoining door. From there, the heroes can hear the sounds of the village as it dies to fire and ettercap claws.

No matter how far they walk along the hall, it seems that the doors and the hall never end. There is always darkness ahead and behind, hiding the far ends of the hall.

This dream scene only serves to enforce the guilt and sorrow that's already eating at the dream seed's subconscious. It ends when he opens one of the two doors mentioned above.

6. The Burning Room. This dream scene begins when the heroes appear in one of the bedrooms in the boarding house. In fact, it is the very same room the dream seed's waking body occupied the night the heroes stayed in Introsia. When the scene begins, the heroes notice a wall of fire raging outside the room's window. The door is hot to the touch, and wisps of dank smoke crawl in under the door.

A. Irronauchs. In this version of the dream scene, the ancient dwarf sits calmly on the bed as the room grows hotter and hotter. For a few moments, he ignores the heroes as he hums an old dwarven war tune and polishes his warhammer. He's wearing his battered plate mail, and the warhammer is the same one he gave to the heroes. He has it even if one of the heroes are carrying it in this dream scene.

Irronauchs doesn't respond to the heroes no matter what they do. As for the heroes, they can't break the window or open the door no matter how hard they try. After a few moments, the walls and ceiling begin to burn. Flames crawl along the wallpaper and drip from the ceiling. It gets so hot that the heroes must make Constitution checks each round. A failed check indicates that the heat has taken something out of the hero; he or she suffers 1d4 points of damage.

After a few rounds of this, Irronauchs finally looks up and smiles. "I can't let the fire kill you," the dwarf assures them as he stands up. "That's an honor I want for myself." With that, the dwarf rushes at the dream seed with his warhammer held high. "For Renee!" Irronauchs shouts. "For Introsia!"

Irronauchs is really the overseer. This dream scene ends when the dream seed is killed (and wakes up) or the heroes defeat the angry dwarf.

Nightmare Irronauchs: Int Very (11); AC 2; MV 6; HD 9; hp 64; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+3 (*warhammer +2*); SZ S (4-feet tall); ML Elite (13); AL LE

B. Renee. This version of the dream plays out like the one above except that Renee is sitting on the bed instead of Irronauchs. Also, she's not ignoring the heroes. To the contrary, she immediately strikes up a conversation with the dream seed as though she's oblivious to the danger around them.

"Where have you been?" Renee asks the dream seed. "I've been waiting for you. You said you'd be back. You said you liked me. I thought you were going to help me run this boarding house. I thought you were going to marry me. Instead, you left me here to die."

As Renee talks, her features slowly begin to change. Burns appear on her face until it becomes a charred mask of flaking flesh. Scratches appear on her arms and across the rest of her body, slowly turning her into a bloody mess. As this occurs, the dream seed must make a fear check early on, then a horror check as the wounds become more gruesome.

Finally, as this is going on, the flames dripping from the ceiling form another fire monster. This one is huge, filling the room with its height and bulk. This is the overseer. To end this scene, the heroes must defeat the fire monster or the dream seed must be forced to awaken.

Huge Fire Monster: Int Very (11); AC 0; MV 15; HD 7; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d12/1d12 (fiery fists); SA fire (if hit, target must save vs. breath weapon or burst into flames; flames inflict 1d8 points of damage per round); SZ L (9-feet tall); ML Elite (13); AL LE

7. The Killing Field. This is the conclusion of this nightmare. Don't use this scene until the dream seed has earned enough mental fortitude points to achieve inner peace. When this occurs, the next time a scene shifts the heroes find themselves standing in a lush field. A gentle breeze blows through the stalks of wheat, making them sway to nature's music. For a moment, the heroes might even feel relaxed and at peace. The moment won't last very long, however.

As the heroes move through the field, they begin to notice that not every stalk is a simple stalk of wheat. What's growing in this field? The people of Introsia. Vines and roots grow out of their flesh and wind around their bodies, eventually spreading into the soil to anchor each villager in place. The heroes notice more and more of these planted villagers until the crop consists almost entirely of them. The sound that the heroes might have mistaken for a gentle breeze is now recognized as a soft song being sung by each of the planted villagers. Among the villagers, the heroes see people they recognize, including Renee and Irronauchs.

Let the horror of this scene sink in (and have the heroes make fear checks) and then spring the next horror upon them. One of the planted villagers some distance away screams in terror, then the voice is immediately silenced. This happens a few times until the heroes see the huge ettercap from Scene 1. It strides through the field wielding a huge scythe which it uses to harvest the planted villagers. The weapon inflicts 1d8+1 points of damage when used against the heroes.

If the dream seed and his companion can defeat the huge ettercap now, then the dream seed will be freed from this dreamscape and the nightmares will end. In fact, as the heroes battle the monster and begin to win, the planted villagers shout encouragement and tell the heroes that what happened wasn't their fault. Even Renee and Irronauchs join in.

"You did everything you could," Irronauchs says. "You can't be blamed for what occurred." "I know that if you'd been here you'd have saved us," Renee says. "But it was the ettercaps that killed us, not you. Grieve for us, remember us, but don't blame yourself for situations over which you had no control."

While all of this is happening, one of the heroes notices a nether portal in the distance. He probably won't know what it is, and the swirling void can't help him now, but it will be important in a later adventure.

When the ettercap is defeated, the dream seed awakens feeling much better. Remember, all experience earned in the dreamscape is earned at half the normal rate.

ADVENTURE III: THE LOATHSOME DEEP

he
drowned
face
always
staring
toward
the sun
the
evidence
of damage
worn by salt and sway into this threadbare
wreck
the ribs of disaster
curing their assertion
among the tentative haunters"

—Adrienne Rich

This adventure takes place after the heroes reach Egertus in Nova Vaasa. They should be at least 4th level to handle this adventure. After playing through "Dark Harvest," the DM should devise some adventures that have nothing to do with dreams and nightmares to occupy the rest of the heroes' trip to the town beside the Dnar River. These adventures don't even need to be recognizably RAVENLOFT in nature, though they should have elements of fear and horror just because they take place in the Demiplane of Dread. The goal is to get the heroes to Egertus so that they can meet Dr. Gregorian Illhousen.

Overview

In this adventure, the heroes dreamwalk into the nightmares plaguing Sylus Andropov, captain of the doomed sailing ship *Wayfarer*. It starts with the heroes arriving in Egertus, searching for the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed. Unfortunately, the members of the Nightmare Court don't want help to reach Dr. Illhousen. They throw a dangerous obstacle in the path of the heroes—a killer who terrorized Nova Vaasa a few years ago as the Kantora Strangler. He recently escaped from Illhousen's clinic, and though he was making progress he now follows the voices from his nightmares.

Once the heroes deal with the Strangler, they reach the clinic and meet Illhousen and his remaining staff. Though they might get the impression that there's a lot of trouble plaguing the clinic (and there is!), Illhousen just asks them to help one of his patients, the sea captain Sylus Andropov.

If the heroes agree, Illhousen sends them into Sylus's nightmares through hypnosis. In the dreamscape, the heroes' dream-selves must find a way to free Sylus from the nightmare prison he's trapped within.

Background

Sylus Andropov has been a friend of Dr. Illhousen for many years. When Illhousen needed to travel the Nocturnal Sea to reach the Nightmare Lands a few months back, he employed Sylus and his ship for the task. The trip started on the Dnar River, but eventually the ship found itself in the thick, clinging mists of the Demiplane of Dread.

For nearly a week the ship drifted in the mist. No wind filled its sails. No current pushed or pulled it in any particular direction. The vessel was literally dead in the water, and the crew was growing more nervous with each passing hour. Then, when Sylus and Illhousen thought that they would be forced to put down a mutiny, the mists cleared.

The shore of the Nightmare Lands appeared out of the dissipating mist to the cheers of the crew. These cheers soon died down when the realization of what was around them sunk in. The shore ahead were barren and rocky, though clouds and a thick forest could be seen on the horizon. Of course, what the crew mistook for clouds were really the permanent dreamscapes of the Nightmare Court. Before the ship could reach the shore, however, it had to navigate through a maze of jagged, rocky shoals. It took all the skill and command

prowess Sylus possessed, plus a lot of luck, to make it through the rocky shoals unharmed.

The crew didn't make it through the shoals intact, however. When the *Wayfarer* passed too close to a wreck trapped upon a jagged rock, sea zombies who had crewed the ship in life attacked with undead fury. Seven members of the crew died before the monsters were driven off. Among the dead crew was Sylus's son, Aylor. The loss of his son was the triggering event that started Sylus's nocturnal troubles.

After Illhousen returned from his expedition ashore, the *Wayfarer* cut through the mists and found its way back to Egertus. The doctor noticed that Sylus appeared shaken and in need of rest, but he attributed the captain's condition to the stress of being in the Nightmare Lands and agony of losing his son. In Egertus, instead of getting better, Sylus's condition only grew worse.

In the three months since the Wayfarer returned to Egertus, everything has gone terribly wrong. Dr. Illhousen has been plagued by the night terror called Mandalain, a frightening specter that has killed or driven off most of the clinic's staff. It was in response to this walking nightmare that Illhousen wrote his journal and sent it to Thorin (see Adventure I). Sylus's nightmares have also become more acute. They reached a point where the captain couldn't function anymore, and he checked himself into the clinic in the hope that Illhousen could help him. Ever thinking of his patients before himself, Illhousen had decided that when Thorin arrived he would send the ranger to help Sylus before presenting his own troubles to his friend.

While dreamwalking to provide Sylus with some comfort, Illhousen wandered into the nightmares of the hero who befriended Renee (see Adventure II). He was saddened to discover that Thorin was dead, but he found solace in the fact that other heroes had taken up his journal and the call for help it contained.

Now Illhousen waits for the heroes to arrive. He does his best to keep the clinic operating, even though he hasn't had much sleep and the night terror continues to haunt him. If these heroes prove capable enough to help Sylus, perhaps they can be persuaded to help Illhousen as well.

Part One: Dream Another Dream

One of the heroes has another vivid nightmare. It occurs the night before the group reaches Egertus. To determine who experiences this nightmare, have all of the players make Wisdom checks for their characters. The player who rolls the highest number for a failed Wisdom check experiences the nightmare described below.

This vivid nightmare could produce lingering effects that follow the hero into the waking world. After the vivid nightmare ends, the dreamer must make a successful system shock roll (the roll receives a –25% penalty) or suffer a –1 penalty to all die rolls for the next 24 hours.

When the hero falls asleep, read or paraphrase the following nightmare:

> You stand in a dungeon corridor. Darkly stained stones on the walls and ceiling press down upon you, making everything feel claustrophobic. Torches spaced every few feet along the walls provide light, but the place still has a cold, dark atmosphere. Though you didn't notice them earlier, now you see that the walls are lined with doors. Arms and hands reach through the barred windows in each door, trying to grab you.
>
> At the end of the hall, a nurse who is partially hidden in shadows tends to a patient on a wheeled bed. She's strapping the patient down, trying to keep him from injuring himself. You recognize the patient. He's the man you saw on the forest road, a man who was in another one of your dreams. The man isn't neat and clean this

time, however. He appears ragged and half-crazed with fear.

"I'm Dr. Illhousen!" the patient screams. "You can't do this to me! I'm not crazy!" The nurse ignores the patient's protestations with the same indifference she shows you. The patient looks at you when you get closer, and his eyes grow even wilder.

"No!" he shouts. "Run! Don't let her get you, too! You can't help me if Mandalain gets you! Run!"

His words make no sense, but the hairs on the back of your neck rise anyway. Then the nurse looks up, and you see what has frightened the doctor so. The nurse has no eyes, just shadowy pools of darkness. Her hair is wild and streaked with white. Worse yet, her hands don't end in fingers—they end in razor-sharp scalpels. She smiles at you. It's a dead, humorless smile. The nurse makes no sound, but her scalpel-fingers scrape together as she raises her hands toward you ...

You wake in a cold sweat, your heart beating like a stampede of wild horses.

In the morning, the heroes continue toward Egertus. They arrive as night falls again.

Part Two: The Kantora Strangler

The Kantora Strangler is the popular name given to a killer who stalked the streets of Nova Vaasa's largest city for six years until he was captured three years ago. Though many people called for the Strangler's death, his true identity won him some significant favors from the court. The Kantora Strangler is Talgaard, brother to the domain's political leader, Prince Othmar. For this reason, instead of being put to death for his crimes, Talgaard was placed in Dr. Illhousen's custody for care.

As the Kantora Strangler, Talgaard stalked his victims on dark, stormy nights. When he was ready, he leaped upon his prey and employed a garrote made of barbed wire to finish his grisly deed. Over the course of two years, Talgaard killed 18 people.

Under Dr. Illhousen's care, Talgaard has made remarkable progress. His violent moods have all but disappeared, and he no longer has a desire to strangle the life out of anyone. At least, he didn't until a few nights ago. That's when the Nightmare Court invaded his dreams, subjecting Talgaard to some of the most terrible nightmares ever imagined. In these dreams, the Nightmare Man explained that there was only one way to stop the terrible images. "You must destroy those who carry Dr. Illhousen's journal," the Nightmare Man said. "They must not be allowed to reach the clinic, or you will never want to sleep again."

Talgaard escaped from the clinic two days before the heroes reach Egertus. A massive hunt for the killer is underway, but Talgaard is as smart as he is desperate. He'll be waiting when the heroes arrive.

Arriving in Egertus

Like the other towns in Nova Vaasa, most of Egertus's buildings are made from stone. Everything has an ancient, weathered look; even buildings constructed as little as one year ago appear old and worn. The town has a population of about 4,000.

The heroes reach the town shortly before nightfall, but the sky has already grown ominously dark. The first few drops of rain hint that a terrible storm is on its way. Read:

> You reach the outskirts of Egertus just as the first drops of rain tumble from the sky. Thunder rumbles overhead and a few jagged bolts of lightning illuminate the dark sky.
>
> Night hasn't completely claimed the world yet, but the thick clouds above make it much darker than would otherwise be the case at this time of day. The streets are mostly deserted thanks to the sudden burst of rain and the obvious threat of a stronger storm to come. You do notice a town guard as he makes his way toward you.
>
> "Welcome to Egertus, travelers," the guard says as he takes your measure with a penetrating glance. "Have you come to our town on business or for pleasure?"

No matter how the heroes respond, the guard nods his head and rolls his eyes toward the thundering clouds. "You'd best find a place to get out of this storm," he cautions them. "And be careful. It's almost night, and you don't want to be on the streets after dark."

If the heroes ask why the streets are dangerous, the guard says, "We had an escape from the clinic. A dangerous madman is on the loose. Don't worry. We'll catch him. But until we do, I'd advise a bit of caution. Watch your backs, friends." The guard can direct the heroes to an inn or to the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed if they ask.

Once the guard has passed along his warning, he bids the heroes farewell and continues on his rounds.

The Strangler Strikes

Whether the heroes decide to find an inn or take their chances trying to reach the other side of town before the storm reaches its full intensity, they encounter the Kantora Strangler. The clinic is about one mile away, on the banks of the Dnar River. The nearest inn is only three blocks away. Whatever they choose, the Strangler is waiting for them.

No matter which destination the heroes have in mind, they eventually turn onto a narrow, quiet street. It looks more like an alley, but

they're pretty sure this is the way the guard directed them. When you're ready to run this scene, read or paraphrase the following:

You turn onto a narrow street just as another bolt of lightning illuminates the sky. It's almost fully night now and a torrent of rain falls from the rumbling sky. The rain hammers at you like small stones, for the drops are large, cold, and falling with great velocity. It only takes a few moments for your clothing to become drenched, and you can hardly see more than a few feet ahead through the curtains of pounding rain. There's so much rain falling that it almost feels as though you're under water, as though you're at the bottom of the sea. This feeling is so strong and the scene in front of you so surreal that for a moment you're sure this must be a dream.

Check to see if the heroes are surprised by what happens next. Make the surprise roll with a –3 penalty, as the Kantora Strangler is very good at surprising his intended victims. Of course, the Strangler would have never attacked so large a party in the old days. The only reason he does so now is because the Nightmare Court has helped release his contained madness.

If the heroes are surprised, the Strangler gets one round of actions before any initiative rolls are made and the heroes get to act. If the heroes aren't surprised, the Strangler still gets to attack first in this first round of combat. After the first round, determine initiative normally.

When the Strangler attacks, read:

Another bolt of lightning shatters the darkness. In the flash, you see a shadowy form dropping toward you as though carried out of the sky with the rain. The lightning flash reflects off a long strand of silver that the figure holds between his hands. Sharp, jagged tangles jut from the otherwise taut line, and it appears as though the figure holds a bolt of lightning in his hands.

Talgaard has seen the heroes in his dreams, their images burned into his memory by the nightmares he's suffered. He believes that by destroying them he will find rest and peace. To this end, he attacks with all the fury and madness he can muster.

The Strangler wears thick leather gloves. He wraps the length of barbed wire around each hand and holds a two-foot length between them. His favorite attack is to wrap the wire around his victim's neck and pull until the victim stops struggling. However, he can also strike with his barbed-wire-wrapped fists and inflict small amounts of damage. He fights until he is killed or knocked unconscious, or until his victims are all dead.

Depending on how much noise the heroes make, town guards arrive in 1d8+3 rounds. If the heroes call for help, they arrive in 1d6+3 rounds instead. Once the guards arrive, Talgaard tries to escape so that he can attack the heroes later. If the heroes haven't defeated him yet, they do so with the guards' help.

Kantora Strangler (7th-level thief): AC 4 (leather armor, Dexterity); MV 12; T7; hp 33; THAC0 17; #AT 2 (due to madness); Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1 (barbed-wire-wrapped fists); SA strangle (instead of normal attack; receives an attack roll bonus of +3; inflicts 1d6+1 points of damage each round and victim must make a Constitution check with a penalty equal to the number of rounds held to keep from falling unconscious; he releases unconscious victims to attack others, planning to finish them off later; victims remain unconscious for 1d4+1 rounds); SZ M (6-feet tall); ML Fanatic (17); AL CE

S 15, D 18, C 14, I 14, W 8, Ch 10

Part Three: The Clinic

If the heroes go on to the clinic after the encounter with the Kantora Strangler, they meet Dr. Illhousen and learn why he has sent for help. If they decide to find an inn and wait until morning, Illhousen sends someone to find them as soon as he receives word of their arrival from the town guards. In this case, use the read-aloud below.

You have just settled into your rooms at the inn when you hear a knock at your door. "Excuse me," a voice calls from the other side of the door, "but Dr. Illhousen of the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed has sent me to fetch you."

The man at the door is huge, a bear of a man dressed in pale clothing beneath his rain-drenched cloak. "I am Hoerring, an orderly at the clinic. If you'll come with me, I'll take you to see the doctor."

If the heroes proceed directly to the clinic after dealing with the Strangler, they meet Hoerring at the front door. He looks at the drenched heroes, nods, and says, "The doctor's been expecting you. This way, please."

When the heroes get their first sight of the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed, read:

The huge, foreboding building rises above the banks of the Dnar River, all stone and glass. If the storm buffeting Egertus this night has a center, then this place is it. As you get closer, the noise of the night grows louder. In addition to the drum beat of rain and the rumbling thunder, you can hear the river rushing by and sloshing over the rocks along the shore. And every once in a while, between peels of thunder, you hear a blood-curdling scream.

Two lanterns burn in front of the main entrance, one on each side of the massive doors. It isn't until another bolt of lightning flashes that you can read the weathered sign above the door: The Clinic for the Mentally Distressed.

Meeting Dr. Illhousen

Hoerring leads the heroes into the large lobby and up the main stairs. Most of the interior of the place is dark, with only a few dim lanterns shining in the distance. Hoerring carries a lantern of his own. He doesn't speak much as he leads the heroes to the second floor. When they reach the top of the stairs, another flash of lightning lights up the far wall of windows ahead of them. The shadows thrown by the light makes the spartan furniture appear menacing and otherworldly. Hoerring turns left, taking the heroes toward Dr. Illhousen's office.

When Hoerring reaches the door at the end of the hall, read:

"Doctor?" Hoerring asks as he pauses in the doorway. Compared to the rest of the place that you've thus far seen, this room is practically bright and cheery. No less than six lanterns are set around the room, as though the occupant was attempting to eliminate the shadows.

"Thank you, Hoerring," says a man sitting near a window behind a large desk. "I won't be needing your services again until morning. Have a safe journey home."

Hoerring nods, then walks back toward the stairs and the main entrance of the clinic. The man behind the desk stands, and you recognize him from somewhere. He is a tall, rotund man, with thick hair and beard, and thick spectacles. You seem to remember him as more neatly attired. The man before you is disheveled, his clothes

appear wrinkled, and he doesn't look like he's slept in a month.

"It's good to have company on a night such as this," the man says as another bolt of lightning slices the darkness outside the window. "I'm Dr. Gregorian Illhousen, chief physician of this clinic. I believe you have a copy of my journal. Will you tell me how you've come to possess it before we get on to the business we must discuss?"

Though Dr. Illhousen has some knowledge about Thorin's death thanks to his recent dreamwalks, there are many gaps in his knowledge that he hopes the heroes can fill in. If the heroes try to be evasive or refuse to tell him what happened to his friend, Illhousen loses his temper—something that usually never happens and wouldn't happen now if the doctor wasn't on the verge of total exhaustion. Illhousen demands to know the details surrounding Thorin's death. "Don't try to lie to me," he says, his voice trembling with rage, "I've seen some of the details in your dreams." Then he gets control of himself and says in a quieter, less hostile voice, "Please."

Once the heroes explain what happened, the doctor remembers his manners. "Please, hold that thought," he says, getting up quickly. "Where are my manners? Can I get you something hot to drink? Some tea perhaps, or a spot of brandy?"

After refreshments are served, the doctor presses the heroes to tell him about their most recent adventures. "Tell me everything you remember since gaining my journal," he urges. "I have a feeling that you've already run into the villainous cabal I call the Nightmare Court."

If the heroes try to get the doctor to explain how he knows all these things, Illhousen grows extremely close to losing his temper again. "All in good time," he says, barely holding back his rage, "I'll explain everything before the night ends and the sun brings back the day."

If the heroes tell Illhousen about the incidents surrounding Introsia (Adventure II), he gives them his sympathy. "The work of the Ghost Dancer," he says. "Of that I'm almost certain." If they ask him about meeting him in their dreams, Illhousen smiles. It's a sad, tired smile. "It's a skill I call dreamwalking," he says softly. "I'll tell you all about it in just a little while.

Eventually, the heroes are going to want to cut to the chase and know why Illhousen sent for Thorin. If they've read the letter printed at the end of *The Journal of Dr. Illhousen*, then they have some notion about the creature called Mandalain.

"The ghost of Mandalain can wait," Illhousen says sternly. "There is someone in greater need than I. Come. It's time I introduced you to Sylus Andropov."

In the Wards of Madness

Dr. Illhousen grabs a lantern and leads the heroes to the far end of the hall. He uses a set of keys hanging from his belt to open a heavy door. This door leads to a stairwell that descends all the way to the clinic's basement. A great boom of thunder shakes the building as the doctor locks the door behind him and starts down into the darkness.

Read:

The doctor leads you down a twisting set of stairs to another locked door. He hands the lantern to one of you so that he can open the door with one of the keys hanging on his belt. There are doors on either side of the short hall beyond, but he passes these to reach the door on the opposite end of the hall. Before he opens it, he turns to regard you with weary eyes.

"Brace yourselves, my friends," Illhousen says. "We are about to enter the wards

where my most troubled patients are kept. What you see and hear may be frightening, but try to remember that these poor souls are ill and in need of compassion. Still, some of them can be dangerous. Please walk along the center of the corridors, keeping well away from the cells on either side of you."

Illhousen walks down the center of the hall, ignoring the wails and reaching hands of the patients behind the cell doors. The patients who aren't restrained in some way can reach through the barred window in each door. The heroes are subjected to insults, pleas for help, and rude comments as they walk between the cells. A few patients, those held in the tightest grip of the Nightmare Court, shout out things designed to rattle the heroes.

"Renee misses you," one patient says, "she wants to know when you're coming back. She says she's all burned up over your leaving." He laughs with manic glee.

Another shouts, "Mandalain has something for you! You'll love it. The pain she inflicts is exquisite in its agony."

"I know where Vonkriz's spellbook is hidden, wizard!" another patient calls. "If you give me your eyes I'll let you see it!"

Eventually, Illhousen reaches a particular cell. He uses another key to open the door. When the lantern light shines into the cell, the heroes see a man curled up on a thin bedroll. The cell reeks of perspiration and fear.

After a moment, the man sits up. He's a large, burly man with a tangled beard. Though once strong and robust, he now appears weak and weary. "Aylor?" he asks with a cracking voice. "Aylor, son? Is that you?"

"No, Sylus," Illhousen says. "It's just Gregorian. Come on, it's time to free you from the nightmares you've been suffering."

Illhousen helps Sylus get to his feet, then leads him and the heroes out of the wards. Along the way, the doctor explains:

"Sylus is captain of the sailing ship *Wayfarer*," Dr. Illhousen says as you exit the wards. "We've been friends a long time. Sylus guided me on my last trip to the place I call the Nightmare Lands. Though we accomplished some of my goals, I failed to recover the item I had sought and a few members of the crew died. One of those crew members was Sylus's son, Aylor. Since we returned, Sylus has been having progressively more terrible nightmares. I'm sure these are the work of the Nightmare Court. They torment him in an effort to hurt me. For this reason, poor Sylus is forced to suffer. I want to end his nightmares. Will you help me set him free?"

If the heroes ask for compensation, Illhousen smiles weakly. "Everyone wants something before they'll do anything," he sighs. "It's the way of the world, I'm afraid. Very well, if you succeed in freeing Sylus I will pay you 200 gold pieces each." If the heroes want to haggle, Illhousen can be convinced to pay as much as 300 gold pieces each and promises that there's more to be earned after Sylus is safe.

Meeting Dr. Tasker

On the way to the treatment room, Illhousen and the heroes encounter the clinic's other doctor, Harrod Tasker. Read:

Dr. Illhousen opens the door leading out of the maze of wards and lets out a startled gasp. You see a light in the hall beyond. A tall, thin man in a neat white smock stands with a lantern in the open doorway to the stairwell. "Who's there?" the man calls.

Give the heroes a moment to respond if they want. Then Illhousen calls out, "It's just me, Harrod. What are you doing prowling around the clinic at this time of night?"

"You're not the only dedicated doctor on this staff, Gregorian," the man returns. "I wanted to check on one of my patients. Poor Caryko hasn't been responding to my treatments as quickly as I would like. And who are these people, Gregorian? More patients for our overcrowded wards?"

"No, Harrod, these are friends of Sylus," Illhousen lies. "Allow me to introduce Dr. Harrod Tasker, one of the doctors here."

Tasker scowls. "One of? Other than you, I'm the only one left." He turns to regard you with an intense stare. "Should these people be wandering around down here?"

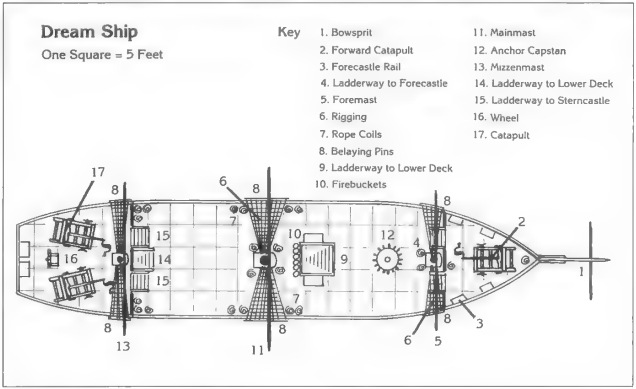
Illhousen dismisses Tasker's concerns. He opens the door to the therapy room (Area 17 on the map of the clinic in the rules book), ushers you in, then says goodnight to Tasker.

The First Dreamwalk

Illhousen's therapy room is a bright, padded chamber with only two pieces of furniture: a chair for the attending physician and a reclining table with attached restraints for the patient undergoing a session of therapy.

The doctor places Sylus on the table and straps the bindings loosely around his arms and legs. Then Illhousen turns to the heroes.

"You must now put your trust in me, my friends," Illhousen says softly. "Lie down upon the padded floor and we'll begin. I'm going to hypnotize you, place you in a light trance, and then send your dream-selves in search of Sylus's nightmare. There's no need to worry. I'll watch over your physical bodies the entire time."



If the heroes are concerned about totally trusting Illhousen, one or more of their number can remain behind to watch over the proceedings. In this case, an encounter is presented below to give the guarding hero(es) something to do. If all of the heroes participate in the dreamwalk, the encounter doesn't take place.

Before attempting to put the heroes into a trance, Illhousen gives Sylus a potion to help him sleep. "Try to rest easy this time, Sylus," the doctor says soothingly. "These good people will be following you into your dreams and they'll see you safely back home again." To place the heroes in a trance, Dr. Illhousen uses the hypnotism proficiency. He needs to roll a 13 or less on a Charisma check to hypnotize a hero. If Illhousen rolls 14 or more, that hero can't be hypnotized at this time.

Once each of the heroes enters a trance (or the attempt fails), each hero must make a Wisdom check with a –4 penalty. If the check succeeds, the hero dreamwalks. If it fails, the hero emerges from the trance in 1d4 rounds. Those who do dreamwalk remain in the trance until the dream ends or until 1 turn has passed. Note that 1 turn in the waking world may be much longer or shorter in the dreamscape.

Those heroes who do manage to dreamwalk appear in Sylus's nightmare. Read:

> You stand upon the deck of a great sailing ship. The ship is currently caught in the grip of a terrible storm. It rocks and bucks beneath your feet as waves crash over the deck and sailors struggle to secure the sails. At the massive wheel, Captain Sylus Andropov battles to keep his ship on course. He calls out orders to you, shouting for you to help secure the ship before the storm hits with all its fury.

The heroes' dream-selves should try to help save the *Wayfarer*. Any heroes with the sailing proficiency should make checks to determine if they can provide significant help. The others should go about securing loose items or helping sailors who lose their footing when the waves crash over the vessel. After a few rounds of this, the dream takes on a darker tone.

As the crew scrambles around you, you see a frightening sight in the sea. Great daggers of stone explode out of the water like newly born mountains. Each one rises near the ship, and you're certain that any one of these jagged peaks could easily slice open the ship's hull. Sylus turns the wheel this way and that with all his might, somehow navigating *Wayfarer* through the terrible obstacle course. Another dagger of stone juts out of the sea, scraping the side of the ship and splashing you with the water it displaced.

"Look alive, son!" Sylus calls, and you see a younger version of the captain tying down a cannon. That's when a jagged peak pierces the hull and stabs through the deck near your feet.

Fear checks should be called for as the ship begins to break apart. Describe the terror of these massive knifelike mountains shooting out of the water and into the air. As this occurs, the heroes need to make Dexterity checks with –3 penalties to keep from falling into the sea. Any hero who gets thrown overboard immediately wakes up and must make a death check as described on page 19 of *The Rules of Dreams and Nightmares*. Any heroes who remain in the dream scene witness the following event.

You manage to keep your balance as the ship breaks apart around you. You see that Captain Sylus remains at the wheel, valiantly struggling to keep his vessel afloat. His son, however, isn't so lucky. Monstrous tentacles reach out of the water and snatch the young man off the deck. Before you can move, the tentacles pull back into the sea—taking young Aylor with them.

Sylus screams, and the sound follows you back to the waking world as you sit up on the padded floor of the therapy room.

The Nightmare Court has been manipulating Sylus's dreams for so long that they've managed to alter the events surrounding Aylor's death. Now, in addition to his son and six other crew members, Sylus believes he lost the entire ship and crew on that journey to the Nightmare Lands.

While You Were Sleeping

If any of the heroes remain awake while the others dreamwalk with Sylus, use this encounter to give them something to do. They spend a few moments watching Illhousen check on the sleepers when they sense a dark presence nearby. Have the awake heroes make fear checks as the terrible specter of Mandalain emerges from the closed door. Read:

The hairs on the back of your neck stand up and you have a sudden urge to turn toward the door. An incorporeal form slips through the closed portal, though the portion in the room slowly takes on deadly substance. You initially see an attractive young woman in a nurse's uniform, but she becomes much more horrifying as she solidifies. Her eyes become empty pools of darkness. Her hair explodes into wild frazzles

streaked with white. Her uniform, once neat and white, becomes tattered and stained. Worse, her beautiful, slender fingers become razor-sharp scalpels like those used by doctors.

"That's Mandalain," Illhousen warns. "Keep her from harming the bodies of your friends while I try to assist the dreamwalkers."

Mandalain's statistics are printed on page 64 of this book. She attacks the awake heroes for 1d6+2 rounds. Though she wouldn't mind destroying a sleeping hero or two, her real purpose at this time is to frighten those who remained awake. Whether she's winning or losing, she disappears as mysteriously as she arrived once the number of predetermined rounds expire. The heroes might want to keep a guard handy for the rest of the night, especially if they agree to participate in another session of dreamwalking.

Part Four: Battling the Nightmare

Though Sylus is in bad shape, the work done so far by Dr. Illhousen has helped the captain nearly achieve inner peace. If the heroes can complete this task and then help destroy the overseer binding him, Sylus can be freed.

Sylus's inner peace number is 18. He has already increased his *mental fortitude rating* to 12. With a little work, the heroes can get the rating up to 18 and then hunt down the overseer of this particular dreamscape.

The member of the Nightmare Court behind these foul nightmares is Morpheus. His overseer in the dreamscape is an ennui charged with making Sylus suffer for the assistance he provided to the hated Dr. Illhousen. The best way the ennui has found to do this is to keep repeating Aylor's death in different ways that are all tied to the sea. He has two more scenes planned for the evening's entertainment—an underwater scene and a scene involving a sea zombie that looks like poor Aylor.

Back to the Waking World

After participating in the first dream scene, the heroes who dreamwalked while in trances wake up. As their heads clear, they hear Sylus's scream. It dies down a moment later. Sylus didn't wake up, but his scream (in both the dreamscape and the waking world) stirred the heroes from the trance Illhousen put them in. After checking on Sylus, Illhousen turns back to the heroes.

"Good work for your first attempt," Illhousen says with a weak smile. "You must allow me to send you back. Sylus is still asleep and dreaming. We can beat these nightmares tonight if you're willing to return to the dreamscape."

If the heroes refuse, Illhousen offers them more reward to change their minds. He can't afford much more than he's already offered them, but he's ready to lie to get Sylus the help he needs. If that doesn't work, it's up to the DM to find a way to get the heroes back into this adventure.

If the heroes agree to another trip into the dreamscape, go on to the next scene.

Under the Sea

Dr. Illhousen once again attempts to put the heroes into a trance, as described on page 40. Those who enter a trance must make Wisdom checks with –4 penalties to dreamwalk.

Once the heroes' dream-selves are ready, they find themselves back on *Wayfarer*. The scene begins just like the last one, except this time the overseer uses the alter dreamscape and invulnerability dream powers on the dream seed (Sylus) and his companions (the heroes). This use of alter dreamscape costs 3 points.

You stand on the deck of *Wayfarer* as a raging storm tosses it about. You and other members of the crew slide on the briny planks and grab at swinging rigging to steady yourselves. Captain Sylus is at the wheel, shouting orders.

The scene plays through as it did the last time: the storm; the giant, jagged rocks covered with sea spray like the teeth of some rabid beast; the tentacles. Then the alter dreamscape power kicks in. Read:

Aylor disappears over the side as the deck beneath you breaks apart. In a moment, you're all in the water, sinking likes stones toward the bottom of the sea.

As you sink, you notice that the undersea realm glows with a faint but steady light. What's more, you seem to be breathing water as though it were fresh air, but this doesn't seem strange to you. Then you reach the bottom and find yourselves standing amid the litter of wrecked ships and monstrous sea plants.

"We've got more trouble, crew," Captain Sylus shouts, pointing to the dark shapes approaching from the distance.

In this underwater scene, the heroes move as though under the influence of a *free action* spell. With the invulnerability dream power also in affect, the heroes can ignore massive amounts of damage inflicted upon them and remain locked in the dream. If the dream scene is forced to change due to this power, it simply starts over from the beginning. The obstacles thrown at the heroes change each time, however, and are listed below. The overseer has decided to let this dream last for four scenes, thus paying a mental fortitude cost of 4 points (which increases Sylus's rating).

Nightmare Barracudas (2–12): Int Animal (1); AC 4; MV Sw 30; HD 4; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+4; SZ M (7-feet long); ML Steady (12); XP 175

Nightmare Electric Eels (1–4): Int Animal (1); AC 7; MV Sw 12; HD 6; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (bite); SA lightning bolt (6d6 damage); SZ L (9-feet long); ML Steady (11); XP 650

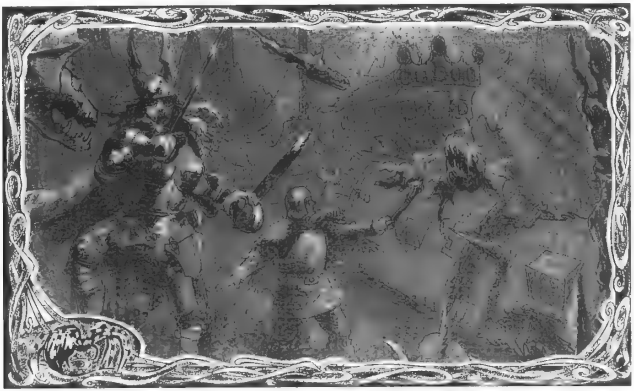
Nightmare Manta Ray (1): Int Animal (1); AC 4; MV Sw 18; HD 12; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4 (bite); SA swallow (on an attack roll 2 or more greater than number needed to hit, it swallows its prey whole), stinger (rear attack only, inflicts 3d10 points of damage and victim must save vs. paralyzation or be stunned for 2d4 rounds); SZ H (20-feet long); ML Elite (13); XP 7,000

Nightmare Giant Shark (1): Int Animal (1); AC 3; MV Sw 18; HD 13; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 5d4; SA swallow (on an attack roll 4 or more greater than number needed to hit, it swallows its prey whole); SZ G (40-feet long); ML Steady (12); XP 7,000

Part Five: To Free Sylus

Whether the heroes remain in a trance or Dr. Illhousen must send them back into the dreamscape one final time, before morning breaks over Egertus Sylus will be set free. Through the preceding dream scenes, the heroes should have been able to help Sylus achieve inner peace. Now they must help the sea captain defeat the overseer that keeps him bound to this watery dreamscape.

Unfortunately, the ennui overseer realizes what is happening and sets a trap for the dreamers. Instead of appearing alongside Sylus, the heroes must find the captain amid a maze of ship wrecks and sea plants.



You find yourselves beneath the waves again, in the undersea graveyard of ships claimed by the rocky shoals and storms above. This time, however, the wrecks seem larger, more numerous. Shattered hulls and broken masts, splintered decks and cracked planking—the wrecks spread out for as far as you can see, hiding who knows what within their water-filled interiors.

In the distance you hear Sylus shout, "Aylor, I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!" You can't quite tell where the shout is coming from, as it echoes throughout the wrecks all around you. To save Sylus, though, you must find him, and that means searching through the wrecks.

Handle this scene carefully, for the opportunity exists to inject some real terror and suspense into the encounter. As the heroes enter a dark wreck, a school of harmless fish swim out and startle them. A bit more searching as Sylus calls out again, and the heroes uncover the half-eaten corpse of some unfortunate sailor. As this body pops into view, the hero who discovers it should make a fear check.

When the heroes get particularly close, the overseer unleashes his last line of defense—another school of nightmare barracudas. There are six of the monster fish this time, and the invulnerability dream power is no longer in affect. The heroes must defeat these creatures before they can find Sylus and bring this nightmare to an end.

The Ties That Bind

Once the heroes defeat the nightmare barracudas, they can locate Sylus. Around a grove of undersea plants as tall as trees, the heroes spot the wreck of the *Wayfarer*. It

appears nearly whole and undamaged. If not for the fact that it was on the bottom of the sea, it looks as though it could still sail.

As the heroes reach this point in the scene, read:

> *Wayfarer* rests on the sea bottom before you, looking like it's ready to sail on the next strong breeze. You stand near the bow. You think you see Sylus at the wheel in the aft section of the ship.

The heroes need to reach the rear of the vessel to help Sylus. They can do this in one of two ways: they can either walk alongside the ship or they can climb onto the deck and walk across it.

If the heroes decide to stick to the sea floor until they reach the aft section, go on to "Resolution" below. If they decide to head up to the deck, read:

> You reach the deck without incident. Except for a few cracks in the planking, the deck looks solid and sound. It's the bodies that look disturbing. The crew of *Wayfarer* litters the deck, 12 men broken and discarded like flotsam on a wave. You can see pain and fear frozen in their expressions. Each man died near his station, hands locked on rigging or grasped tight to the side rail. You walk past these poor men as you move toward the great wheel.

If the heroes specifically ask, they can't spot Aylor among the dead crew members. None of the corpses so much as move as the heroes walk past, though the heroes may feel as though they're being watched; Wisdom –2 checks to get this feeling.

When the heroes come in sight of the aft deck and the great wheel, go on to "Resolution."

Resolution

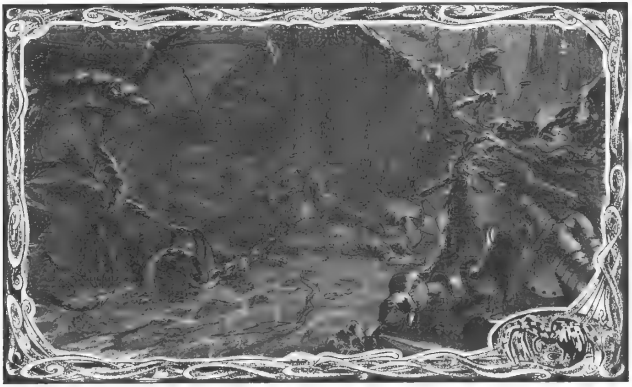
The aft deck appears nightmarish to the heroes, though Sylus seems oblivious to the situation. He seems to be reliving the twisted version of the sea voyage that has been developed by the overseer. He struggles with the wheel, shouts orders, and constantly calls out for his son.

> Sylus stands at the great wheel, steering the ship through a course and storm that only he can see. He shouts orders to dead crew members, curses the nonexistent wind and rain, calls out warnings about rising chunks of jagged rock that only he can see, and continues to yell, "Aylor, where are you lad?"
>
> You notice that a thick chain binds Sylus to the wheel. The chain has a supernatural look to it, for it glows with an evil light and you can see through it. The chain connects to a similar collar around Sylus's neck.

No matter what the heroes say or do, Sylus ignores them as he continues to experience the dream wreck of *Wayfarer*. The heroes can't harm the chain or collar that binds Sylus to this dreamscape. After a few moments, the dead crew members rise up to attack. Read:

> As you try to help Sylus snap out of the illusion he's in, you hear planks creak behind you. Turning, you see that the crew members have gotten up and begun to walk toward you—though they still look as dead as they did before!

The crew members are sea zombies intent on having the heroes join them in undeath. They attack as soon as they reach the aft deck, which gives the heroes one round of free actions with which to cast spells or make other preparations.



Sea Zombies (12): Int Low (6); AC 7; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 5; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SA stench (save vs. poison or be nauseated, –1 attack roll penalty and +1 AC penalty for 2d4 rounds); SD fire-based attacks inflict half damage, lightning and cold-based attacks inflict double damage, immune to sleep and charm spells; SZ M (6-feet tall); ML Fearless (19); XP 420

After three rounds of battle with the sea zombies, the overseer appears in the form of Aylor. Aylor also appears as a sea zombie, with the same statistics listed above. He takes a position next to Sylus, which causes the poor man to wail in sorrow and fear. Aylor whispers, "You killed me, father. You failed me and the crew. You're a sorry excuse for a captain, and your incompetence cost us all our lives. Look what happened to your beloved ship. Look what happened to me!"

If the heroes remind Sylus that the events didn't play out that way, that his ship is still intact and most of the crew returned safely, then the captain visibly straightens. As long as the inner peace number has been reached, damage inflicted on the overseer actually hurts it. It can be destroyed if the heroes move quickly.

If the heroes inflict enough damage to drive the overseer to half his total hit points, he reverts to his true form—an ennui. As an ennui, the overseer appears as a winged humanoid with four arms and a long tail. Its form is sleek and fluid, with no clearly defined features. When the overseer shifts to its true form, the dream scene shifts as well. The Wayfarer disappears, leaving Sylus chained to the sea floor and weeping for the men he lost. The overseer isn't finished with Sylus yet, however.

Wayfarer disappears as Aylor changes form. Now only the sea floor and the wrecks of unnamed ships remain, along with Sylus who's now chained to the sea floor. The dead crew members continue to fight you, but Aylor now appears as a nightmarish creature with wings, four arms, and a tail.

"This dreamer is mine!" the creature screams in a horrible voice. "This is no concern of yours. Depart, and I won't enter your nightmares next."

The heroes should ignore this threat and finish the battle with the overseer. The sea zombies are nothing but a distraction and should be left alone so that the heroes can concentrate on the ennui.

As more damage is inflicted on the ennui, several things begin to happen. First, the sea zombies shift into their true form of shadow morphs and scamper away. Second, the supernatural chain and collar binding Sylus begin to crack, eventually crumbling into nothingness. Third, Sylus comes to grips with the loss of his son. Read:

As the creature before you falls, you see that the chain binding Sylus has begun to break apart. An image shimmers into view in front of the sea captain. You recognize the form as Aylor. "It wasn't your fault, father," Aylor says with love and respect in his voice. "You saved the ship and the rest of the crew. You got them back home safely. Grieve for me, father, and remember me. But don't blame yourself for something over which you had no control." Father and son hug as the chain finally falls away and the creature before you dies. There's a blazing, comforting light, and you travel back toward wakefulness with glad hearts and a sense of profound accomplishment.

Part Six: Back at the Clinic

The heroes wake up in the therapy room. Sylus has also awakened, and he looks much better than he did earlier. "Thank you, Gregorian," Sylus says. "And thank you, too, my new friends."

The group returns to the second floor as the sun begins to rise outside. The storm has ended, and birds can be heard singing in the nearby trees. Illhousen takes Sylus to an empty apartment across from his office to rest, then he leads the heroes back into his office. Illhousen has one last request to make of the heroes. Read:

"You did well, my friends," Illhousen says as he motions for you to sit down. "If you still want to help destroy the ghost of Mandalain, I would be willing to accept your assistance."

If the heroes agree to help, Illhousen nods and continues:

"To destroy this creature which I call a night terror, you need to recover an item called the rose of midnight," Illhousen explains. "The rose is a special flower that blooms in the middle of the night in only one location—a lot in the Ghettoes of the Nightmare Lands. Please, save your questions. Right now you should get some rest, wash up, and have something to eat. We'll talk more about this later in the day."

With that, Illhousen provides the heroes with a place to sleep, a place to wash, and shows them where the kitchen and dining room are located. After a few hours of rest, the heroes continue with Adventure IV: The Rose of Midnight.

ADVENTURE IV: THE ROSE OF MIDNIGHT

"You want to go where? You're braver than I thought!"
—Abukar the Insane

This adventure takes the heroes to the Nightmare Lands in search of an item that can destroy the night terror, Mandalain. This item, called the rose of midnight, is the night terror's one true weakness and the means for ending the curse hanging over the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed.

The heroes should be of at least 7th level to handle the obstacles in this adventure. If they need to gain a few levels between the events of Adventure III and the start of this scenario, the DM will need to come up with a few situations while Sylus readies his vessel for another journey into the mists.

Set Up

If the heroes accept the task presented to them by Dr. Illhousen at the end of Adventure III, then the events of this adventure play out as described in the following pages. If the heroes initially refuse to take up the quest for the rose of midnight, then the DM must find a way to involve the heroes in this plot.

Some possibilities include plaguing the heroes with nightmares about Mandalain and the clinic until they feel compelled to act, having them witness evidence of Illhousen's slowly building breakdown until they want to help, and having Dr. Tasker's thugs pay them a visit to try to scare them away. (Nothing pushes heroes to get involved in something like trying to keep them out of it.)

In the latter case, Dr. Tasker sends the thugs from town that he uses on occasion to threaten the heroes. Specifically, the thugs warn the heroes to "stay away from Illhousen if you know what's good for you. If you don't, you'll need more than a doctor to put you back together." The thugs won't reveal who sent them, but they will admit that Illhousen has made some powerful enemies.

Overview

The heroes physically journey to the Nightmare Lands in this adventure. The trip across the Nocturnal Sea aboard the *Wayfarer* ends with the vessel crashing upon the rocky shoals, but the heroes can help rescue the majority of the crew. An overland trek to the Forest of Everchange follows, wherein the heroes try to find the Abber shaman Walks Alone. If they perform a small task for the shaman, he gives them a dreamcatcher—the only chance they have of escaping from the Nightmare Lands after they've located the rose of midnight.

From the wilderness, the heroes enter the City of Nod. In this place of dark dreams and lost hopes, the heroes have brief encounters in the Theater Macabre and the Nightmare Clinic before they reach Mullonga's Ghettoes. In the Ghettoes, Mullonga uses all of her powers to destroy the heroes, but if they can prevail then the rose of midnight will be theirs.

With the dreamcatcher to guide them, the heroes take the rose and search out a nether portal in one of the permanent dreamscapes. If all goes well, they return to the clinic in Egertus and destroy the night terror of Mandalain once and for all.

Background

Mandalain was a nurse at the clinic and a good friend to Dr. Illhousen. She was killed by a patient named Kerst, who had been compelled to slay her at the urgings of his

nightmares.

The images of Mandalain's death haunted Dr. Illhousen's nightmares for a time. It was from these gruesome imaginings that the Nightmare Man sculpted his greatest creation—the night terror known as Mandalain. This night terror is not the true Mandalain, not the ghost of the poor, dead woman; instead, the creature is a construct made from Illhousen's nightmares.

The night terror first crossed into the waking world about one year ago. At first the creature was more annoying than disturbing. Then it took on a more hostile approach to haunting the clinic; it terrorized and it killed. Staff members resigned with each passing day, and Illhousen's nights became more frightening. As the stress of running the clinic with less and less staff increased, the nightmares grew progressively worse.

At wit's end, Illhousen could think of no way to combat this particular plot. He was coming to the conclusion that the Nightmare Court was finally going to win when one of his patients provided a clue toward solving the current problems. The patient was Old Derek, one of the few people who remembered when the Nightmare Lands were close enough to walk to. In fact, Old Derek claimed to have traveled that mad countryside many times in his youth. It wasn't until old age set in that the nightmares became too much to handle.

Old Derek talked about his most recent dream during a session of therapy with Dr. Illhousen. "I was running through the ghettoes of the Nightmare City, trying to escape from Mandalain, when I came upon an empty lot between two decrepit buildings," Old Derek recalled. "In the middle of the lot was a single flower. It looked like a rose, but instead of being closed against the night it bloomed when the moon reached the top of the sky. When it bloomed, magical light spilled from inside the flower. I heard a scream behind me. Mandalain was real close, ready to slice me apart, but the light was hurting her. I think it would have killed her if she hadn't fled into the night. I tried to reach for the flower, to grab hold of it so I could use it again, but as soon as I touched it I woke up."

Illhousen's trip to the Nightmare Lands aboard the *Wayfarer* was not just an exploratory mission. He wanted to find the rose of midnight. He did locate the empty lot, and he saw the flower growing there, but before he could retrieve it he was forced to flee. He felt the safety of the remaining crew was more important than his own failing health.

A few weeks ago, a desperate Dr. Illhousen sent for his old friend Thorin. He wanted to send Thorin into the Nightmare Lands to retrieve the flower. Now his only hope is the heroes who came in Thorin's place.

Part One: The Sea Journey

Because space is limited, much of this adventure is presented as an outline. The DM is encouraged to expand the encounters and flesh the scenario into a full-length adventure.

Captain Sylus has volunteered to take the heroes into the Nightmare Lands. Why is he willing to risk his ship again? There are a few reasons. He wants to help his friend, Dr. Illhousen. He knows the way and has made the trip before. He feels he owes the heroes for what they did for him. Finally, he wants to do whatever he can to hurt the creatures that took his son from him and then tormented him with nightmares about the event.

Once Sylus has assembled a crew and readied *Wayfarer* for another voyage, the heroes can set out at any time. Sylus has added two life boats to his vessel in case of an emergency; each boat can carry 10 men.

Dr. Illhousen won't be making this journey. He's too weak from lack of sleep, and he doesn't trust himself to be of any use to the heroes. He does provide some useful advice before they cast off. Read:

"I wish I could accompany you, but I fear I'd be more of a liability than an asset at this point," Dr. Illhousen says solemnly. "On your way to the City of Nod, seek out the Abber shaman called Walks Alone. He can be found in the Forest of Everchange. The shaman helped me once, and he might help you as well. Ask him for a dreamcatcher, for you might need such a device to escape from the Nightmare Lands."

If the heroes ask, a dreamcatcher is a magical item that can help them direct the currents of the nether portals. If they have no other means available for returning home, they'll need to enter a dreamscape and find a nether portal. Without a dreamcatcher, a nether portal can send them anywhere. But with the shaman's gift, the heroes will be able to return to Egertus.

Once this advice has been passed along, Sylus ushers them onto the *Wayfarer* and the ship sets sail down the Dnar River.

Into the Mists

The trip down the Dnar passes without incident. Then the Wayfarer reaches the place where the river meets the wall of mist. Read:

"Fog ahead!" shouts the ship's lookout. All eyes turn to look at the place where the river seems to end and the mysterious wall of mist begins.

"Are you ready, lads?" Sylus asks. He doesn't really expect a response as he adjusts the wheel. "These mists are eerie, but they won't last more than a week. Besides, what waits on the other side of the mist is a lot worse than the mist itself."

Once the *Wayfarer* enters the mists, time seems to stand still. No wind fills the sails. No current pushes against the ship. All the heroes can hear are the gently lapping waves and the hollow sounds of the crew members talking in various parts of the ship.

No encounters need to occur during this part of the journey, though the DM can add a few if he likes. For the most part, the journey through the mists should be suspenseful and mysterious. The ship doesn't seem to move, though Sylus assures the crew that it will soon reach its destination. Strange sounds can be heard from far off in the mist. Most of these sounds can't be identified, but sometimes a recognizable phrase reaches the ears of the heroes. Some of these include: "Go back," "join us," and "you're all going to die."

The Rocky Shoals

After about a week, the *Wayfarer* emerges from the mists and the crew spots the rocky shoals. Read:

> Suddenly the sensation of movement returns as the *Wayfarer's* bow slices the mist. The vessel emerges from the mist and enters a stormy, wave-tossed sea. "Rocks ahead!" the lookout calls. "And beyond the rocks, land!"

The heroes should experience a sense of familiarity as *Wayfarer* navigates through the rocky shoals. The scene follows much the same course as Sylus's dreams in Adventure III. Rain and lightning explode from the sky. Salty spray splashes over the deck of the ship. Great jagged rocks suddenly rise out of the water as the boat passes by. For the most part, the crew and Sylus handle this part of the journey with few problems. Then a jagged rock juts from the sea directly in the ship's path. Read:

> The rocky precipice that blocks your path looks like the sharp tooth of some giant sea creature. A wrecked ship clings to the rock, pierced through the middle like a speared fish. "We're not going to clear it, lads," Sylus shouts above the smashing waves. "Brace yourselves and prepare to lower the life boats!"

Wayfarer hits the rock head on. The hull breaks open and the deck splinters upon impact. The ship immediately begins to take on water and sink. The heroes can help prepare the life boats, but they'll soon have another problem to deal with. The wreck on the rocks houses several sea zombies who want nothing more than to feast on living flesh. What's more, this isn't a dream. These sea zombies can inflict real damage and even kill the heroes.

Sea Zombies (3–12): Int Low (6); AC 7; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 5; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SA stench (save vs. poison or be nauseated, –1 attack roll penalty and +1 AC penalty for 2d4 rounds), disease (10% chance due to putrid, bacteria-coated weapons); SD fire-based attacks inflict half damage, lightning and cold-based attacks inflict double damage, immune to sleep and charm spells; SZ M (6-feet tall); ML Fearless (19); XP 420

This scene ends with the heroes and however many of the crew survives escaping in the life boats. Sylus should be among the survivors.

Outlands and the Ring of Dreams

The heroes come ashore on the broken coast of the Outlands. Look at *The Journal of Dr. Illhousen* and *The Rules of Dreams and Nightmares* for possible encounters that can occur in this blasted terrain. Otherwise, the heroes next reach the Ring of Dreams.

At the Ring of Dreams, the heroes get their

first look at the exterior of dreamscapes. The crew should accompany the heroes, and in any case Sylus insists on traveling with them. Encounters near the Ring of Dreams include examining or even entering the dreamscapes, though the heroes probably should avoid this course until later in the adventure. For dramatic effect, one of the crew members can be pulled into a dream sphere. See *The Rules of Dreams and Nightmares* for details concerning the Ring of Dreams.

Sylus (male human fighter, 1st level): AC 7 (leather, Dexterity); MV 12; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (long sword); SZ M (6-feet tall); ML Elite (13); AL NG
S 15, D 15, C 14, I 15, W 12, Ch 9

Typical Crew Member (male human, 0 level): Int Average (9); AC 8 (leather); MV 12; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); SZ M (6-feet tall); ML Steady (11); AL NG

Part Two: The Forest of Everchange

When the heroes reach the Forest of Everchange, the place appears to be a typical forest. There isn't even the slightest hint that they are traveling through the Terrain Between. After about an hour of travel, they encounter the first horror of the place, Mullonga's flock of arcane heads.

Arcane Heads

The arcane heads are described fully in the *Monstrous Supplement* included with this boxed set. Please refer to that book when running this encounter. The heads normally prowl the Terrain Between in search of living, physical bodies for their mistress, the witch Mullonga. They catch the scent of the heroes and move in to attack them. Read:

The forest grows exceedingly quiet as you push through the underbrush. The insects buzzing around your head are gone, and the unseen animals have paused their forest song. You step into a clearing when the first bird swoops at you. Then you notice that it isn't a bird—it's a human head! These severed heads have somehow gained the power of flight and are attacking you.

There are 13 arcane heads. They hope to keep the heroes off balance with quick attacks while they try to open the portal for Mullonga to step through. The heroes should be able to keep the heads from calling Mullonga at this point, as the heroes will get to meet her later in this adventure. If five of the heads do manage to open the portal, the heroes see Mullonga's dark, withered arm and clawlike hand reach through. If one of the heads is attacked within that same round, the portal snaps shut. Once the heroes defeat at least five of the heads, the rest of the flock flies away.

Arcane Heads (13): Int Average (10); AC 3 (7 if held); MV Fl 15; HD 2; hp 12 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (bite); SA bash (save vs. spell or be stunned for 1d4+1 rounds); SZ T (1-foot diameter); ML Elite (13); AL CE; XP 270

Walks Alone

The heroes eventually reach a lake in the middle of the forest. Though the day was gray as twilight, it was also as warm as a spring day. That changes when the heroes reach the lake. Suddenly the weather turns bitter cold and the lake becomes a frozen wonderland. This wonderland contains menace, however, for Morpheus has learned that there are invaders in his territory. Read:

You walk along the shores of the frozen lake, seeking a place to cross or a way to go around it. As you continue your search, you hear a great crack as though the ice was breaking apart.

In the center of the lake, the jagged chunks of ice assemble themselves into a vaguely humanoid form. The ice monster stands nearly nine-feet tall, and his huge arms end in sharp, icicle points. "You helped the dreamer who belonged to us," the monster bellows with the force of the frozen north wind. "You will pay for that outrage!" The ice monster slides toward you with murderous intent …

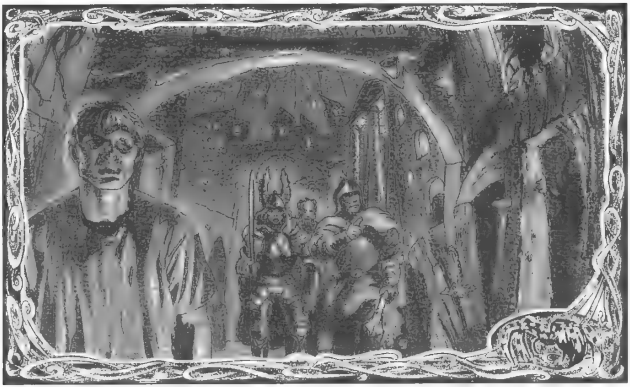
Morpheus, angry that the heroes freed Sylus from his dreamscape, sends this ice nightmare to destroy them. Though it's strong, the heroes shouldn't have too much trouble bringing it down.

Ice Monster: Int Low (7); AC 5; MV 9; HD 8; hp 46; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10+1/1d10+1; SZ L (9-feet tall); ML Champion (15); AL N; XP 650

The Abber shaman Walks Alone watches from the shadows by the trees. Once the heroes defeat the ice monster, he makes his presence known. Read:

"That didn't take too long," a voice calls from out of the trees. A moment later a man steps into sight. He's tall, with dark hair and a surreal outfit sewn together from the hides of what must be dream animals and nightmare monsters. "The doctor has sent you to help me, and then I will help you."

The shaman introduces himself as Walks Alone. He is much friendlier than other Abber



nomads, not only because he's a shaman but because he has interacted with Dr. Illhousen and Dr. Van Richten in the past. His readings of signs in the wilderness told him that Illhousen had sent people to help him. Now he explains what he needs.

"Wanderers," Walks Alone says, "you have come to this land to aid me in my plight. I thank you. When you finish, I'll give you a dreamcatcher so that you may find your way home safely." With that, Walks Alone turns to leave. Then he turns back to you, as though he just remembered another detail.

"Oh yes, I should describe my problem," the shaman says with some embarrassment. "While I was dreamwalking, my dream-self was captured by the Ghost Dancer. You must enter the Theater Macabre and set my dream-self free."

If the heroes ask how the shaman can be walking around without his dream-self, Walks Alone shrugs. "Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that Abbers don't normally dream," the shaman says. "Dr. Illhousen might be able to tell you more, though I've never had to fall asleep the way he does to dreamwalk."

In fact, since Abber nomads don't dream, the shaman's dream-self is a more independent entity. Still, he can't survive much longer with a part of himself missing. He has maybe another two days before he falls into a coma from which he'll never be able to awaken. If the heroes succeed in freeing Walks Alone's dream-self, he'll give them a dreamcatcher and instruct them in its use.

Part Three: The City of Nod

Next the heroes enter the City of Nod. They should have two specific destinations: the Theater Macabre to recover Walks Alone's dream-self, and Mullonga's Ghettoes to find the rose of midnight.

When the heroes step into the city, read the following description out loud:

> The buildings before you appear ancient and vacant, as though whoever constructed them abandoned them long ago. The buildings have distorted lines and weird angles, and everything has a gloomy, ominous feel in this silent, deserted place.
>
> Broken glass occupies some of the windows, and most of the doors hang precariously in their frames. Though you haven't seen a single person, you have the distinct feeling that someone—or something—is watching you.

Meeting a Dreamer

As the heroes search for the Theater Macabre, they encounter a dreamer. The dreamer has somehow lost his way and stepped out of a dreamscape to wander the Terrain Between. The dreamer appears solid near the center, but his limbs and head fade into ethereal mist. The dreamer doesn't seem to notice the heroes. He simply walks by looking this way and that as if in search of something himself.

Any hero who makes a Wisdom check with a –2 penalty notices that the dreamer clutches a pamphlet in his hands. The pamphlet shows an ornate logo: "The Theater Macabre." Below this title are the words, "Now Showing—The Ghost Dancer's Ballet."

If the heroes follow the dreamer, he'll lead them to the Theater Macabre. When the dreamer reaches the great doors at the front of the building, he shrieks and disappears.

A Night at the Ballet

Refer to the poster map that shows the Theater Macabre when running this encounter. The heroes can enter the lobby and the auditorium without incident. Inside the auditorium, however, they must deal with the undead audience waiting to catch the Ghost Dancer's latest performance.

The heroes' best bet is to find Walks Alone's dream-self and get out of the theater before the night's performance begins. The performance starts in 1d12+8 rounds. Each round until the beginning of the performance, certain clues point to the fact that the show will start soon—unseen musicians tune ghostly instruments, lights dim, curtains open, and haunting music fills the theater. If the heroes are still inside when the show starts, then the Ghost Dancer attacks them using her special dance attack (see the Ghost Dancer entry in the *Monstrous Supplement* included with this boxed set).

To find Walks Alone, the heroes must search the aisles. Almost every seat is occupied by an undead zombie or ghoul. These creatures snarl at the heroes, but only the ones in Walks Alone's row will attack them. The heroes locate Walks Alone's dream-self in a number of rounds equal to half the lowest successful Wisdom check rolled, rounded up. So, if the lowest successful check is 10, then Walks Alone is located in 5 rounds.

Once the heroes locate him, they must grab Walks Alone's hand and lead him from the theater. For a dream-self, his hand is unusually solid, though it still feels soft and ready to dissipate without notice. The undead members of the audience in Walks Alone's row try to stop the heroes. There are six zombies and four ghouls between the shaman's dream-self and the aisle.

Zombies (6): Int Non- (0); AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD immune to sleep and charm spells; SZ M ; AL N; XP 65

Ghouls (4): Int Low (5); AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 13 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3 (claws), 1d6 (bite); SA paralyzation; SD immune to sleep and charm spells; SZ M (5-feet tall); ML Steady (11); AL CE; XP 175

After the Show

When the heroes escape from the theater with Walks Alone's dream-self, two things happen. First, the dream-self becomes insubstantial and drifts into the sky. Second, a solid Walks Alone steps out of the shadows and waves to the heroes. Read:

> "I feel better already," Walks Alone says as he walks toward you. He carries a wooden staff topped by a circle of woven thread, straw, and feathers arranged in a strange pattern. "Here is the dreamcatcher I promised you." He hands you the item.

The heroes now have a dreamcatcher, a magical item that can help them return home. The shaman departs after that, obviously pleased to be whole again.

The Nightmare Clinic

As the heroes continue to seek out Mullonga's Ghettoes, they come across a familiar building in the ancient city. The Clinic for the Mentally Distressed stands before them, looking even more foreboding and ominous in this nightmarish setting. Read:

> The clinic looks even more dismal than the version in Egertus. No Dnar River runs beside the clinic, and the area around it is as deserted as the rest of the City of Nod. Otherwise, the place appears completely identical to Illhousen's clinic except for one significant change—the sign over the door reads "The Egertus Asylum."

If the heroes decide to explore the Egertus Asylum, develop encounters based on the information presented below. If they decide to bypass the place, they eventually reach Mullonga's Ghettoes.

This clinic is used as an experiment in torture by Dr. Tasker's dream-self. If the heroes explore the place, they discover a dark, dreary building full of screaming patients and rooms full of the tools of torture and pain. Tasker tries to capture the wanderers so that he can commit them and experiment on them. He remembers them from the waking world and immediately hates them for befriending Dr. Illhousen.

Discovering this place of Tasker's nightmarish delights should give the heroes a clue that the doctor isn't all he seems to be. When they return to Egertus, they'll want to warn Illhousen and deal with this evil physician. Of course, that assumes that the heroes can escape from Tasker's asylum.

Tasker's Dream-Self (male human, 0 level): AC 8 (leather apron); MV 12; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SZ M (6-feet tall); ML Elite (14); AL LE
S 13, D 16, C 15, I 16, W 13, Ch 12

Dream Spawn and Lost Souls

As the heroes wander the streets of Nod, they might encounter various types of lesser dream spawn and even a few lost souls. Refer to the entries in the *Monstrous Supplement* included in this boxed set for details and statistics.

Part Four: Mullonga's Ghettoes

The heroes don't so much find Mullonga's Ghettoes as the Ghettoes find them. The ancient tenements and narrow streets move through the City of Nod like a massive, living creature. Since Mullonga's arcane heads ran into the wanderers earlier, the witch has been searching the city for them. She wants to capture the wanderers and use them in her arcane ceremonies, for in the Nightmare Lands physical forms are sources of power.

When the heroes have finished all of the encounters the DM has planned for the City of Nod, the Ghettoes arrive. Read:

> A great rumble causes the ground to shake and the buildings around you to tremble. It feels like an earthquake, though none of the buildings actually collapse and the street doesn't break open. The wide street changes in the blink of an eye, becoming a narrow alley. The buildings, once tall and ominous, transform into low, decrepit tenements full of shadows and foul odors. Once the ghetto is in place, the trembling stops.

A Child's World

Give the heroes a moment to try to figure out what just happened. Then Mullonga appears. Read:

> An old woman steps out of the shadows. She looks so frail and ancient that she might blow away in a strong wind. This hunched woman with dark, leathery skin dresses in animal skins and leans on a gnarled staff.
>
> "You have come searching for something, wanderers?" the old woman asks in a voice that's as dry as sand. "You wish to steal something from Mullonga's home? That is not allowed!"
>
> Her staff glows with an evil light that spills over you. The light makes your flesh tingle and your eyes hurt. As it gets brighter, your vision gets blurry and distorted. The old woman seems to be moving away from you and getting larger at the same time. Then the light fades and you realize what has occurred—you've been made smaller!

The heroes have been transformed into children through a combination of Mullonga's magic and the dream influence of the Terrain Between. All of the heroes' equipment has been transformed along with them. The equipment becomes toylike versions of their true forms: all weapons inflict half their normal damage, though any magical bonuses still apply; metal armor is reduced by two ranks, while nonmetal armor retains all of its protective properties. For example, a hero with a *long sword +2* and plate mail armor now inflicts 1d4+2 points of damage (instead of 1d8+2) and his armor provides an AC 5 (instead of AC 3).

The heroes also undergo some changes. Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores don't change. Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores are reduced by 1d4 points each. Movement rates are also cut in half.

"Much better," Mullonga says. "Now you are not thieves. You are children, bad children. No, you are mice. And I know how to deal with mice." She whistles, and black cats the size of lions pad out of the shadows.

The black cats chase the heroes through the giant streets, eventually cornering them in an alley. Play up the fear that the heroes should feel due to being so small. Everything is larger than they are, and things they used to take for granted are harder to deal with—including door knobs, steps, and windows.

Statistics for the black cats are provided below. Note that these statistics take into account the cats' larger size as compared to the heroes, as well as some magical changes wrought by Mullonga. These statistics, along with the changes the heroes had to make as described above, make the black cats particularly dangerous to the child-sized heroes.

Black Cats (4): Int Animal (1); AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 38, 32, 26, 24; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d10 (claw/claw/bite); SZ M ; AL N; XP 650

Terrors of Childhood

After the heroes defeat or escape from the black cats, they have other terrors to deal with. The DM should develop as many or as few of these as he feels add to the story. Use the crew of the *Wayfarer* as examples of what can happen to children in the Ghettoes (one falls to a cat's jaws, etc.), as well as giving the heroes someone to protect.

Possible terrors include rats, gray morphs posing as derelicts and madmen, shadow morphs transformed into monsters from children's stories, and packs of wild dogs. Remember, ordinary animals become monstrous when compared to the child-sized heroes and enhanced by the witch's magic.

The Flower in the Empty Lot

The heroes come upon the empty lot that holds the rose of midnight by accident. The place is disguised by Mullonga's spells, however. When the heroes arrive, it looks like a great pit beside a witch's hut. The pit is full of discarded clothing, broken toys, and unidentifiable bones. Mullonga has designed the place to frighten children. The only problem is that while the heroes see things as children do, they are really adults.

The witch rushes out of the hut when the heroes draw close. She attacks, trying to knock as many of them into the pit as she can. Any attack roll that hits by 2 or more points greater than the needed number knocks a hero into the pit. Mullonga continues to battle the heroes at the top of the pit, but she isn't really trying to destroy them. She wants to break their spirits and then deposit them in dreamscapes for safekeeping.

The heroes in the pit, however, must deal with the broken toys. These macabre, giant toy soldiers and animals come alive to attack any heroes in the pit, as well as directing attacks to the rose of midnight, which is hidden in the pit.

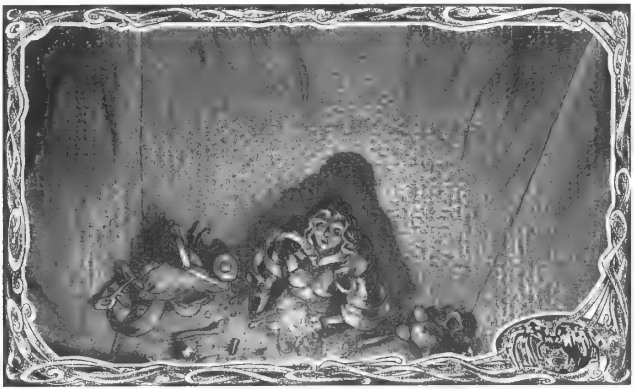
Animated Toys (2–8): Int Non- (0); AC 6; MV 6; HD 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SA paralyzation (when hit, target must save vs. paralyzation or be stunned for 1d4 rounds); SZ T (6-inches to 2-feet tall); AL NE; XP 120

To find the rose, a hero must make a save vs. spell to see through Mullonga's illusion. Make these saving throws in secret, only revealing what the heroes really see if the roll is successful. What do they really see? Read:

> The pit and the hut disappear. Mullonga and her animated toys battle you in an empty lot situated between two tenement buildings. In the center of the lot, a single flower grows. As you watch, the moon reaches the top of the sky and the flower blossoms to greet it. Waves of pure light emanate from the open flower, destroying the toys and releasing you from Mullonga's spell.

The heroes can take the flower while Mullonga is temporarily blinded from the good light it gave off. She flees until her senses clear. The heroes have at least an hour before the witch can return to battle them.

The details of reaching a dreamscape and finding a nether portal are left to the DM. Perhaps Walks Alone appears to direct them to one, or maybe Dr. Illhousen's dream-self shows up to give them a clue or two. Once they do locate a portal, however, the dreamcatcher sends them back to Egertus, depositing them outside the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed.



Part Five: The Clinic Once More

The nether portal deposits the heroes on the street outside the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed. With the rose of midnight, they have the means to finally destroy the night terror, Mandalain.

In the Clinic

It's night in Egertus when the heroes return, and another terrible storm is raging. The lights in the clinic are all out, and Mandalain is terrorizing Dr. Illhousen in an effort to finally shatter his mind. In addition, Dr. Tasker and his six thugs are waiting in the darkness to deal with the heroes. Tasker was warned by the Nightmare Man that the heroes would be returning. If the heroes visited the nightmare clinic, they might be ready for Tasker. If they didn't, then surprise is against them.

Before the heroes can head upstairs to save Illhousen they must defeat Tasker and his thugs. Then they can seek out Mandalain.

Mandalain battles with all the fury the night terror can muster. With the light of the rose of midnight shining in the darkness, Mandalain can't turn incorporeal. This means the heroes can eventually destroy her. See page 64 for Mandalain's statistics and details about the rose of midnight.

Conclusion

When the heroes finally defeat Mandalain, they break the evil curse that has been hanging over Dr. Illhousen and his clinic. This doesn't mean that Illhousen won't be troubled by the Nightmare Court in the future, but for now he can rest. The heroes walk away with experience, whatever price Illhousen agreed to pay, and a dreamcatcher. If they want, Illhousen can also teach them to dreamwalk.

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Flock
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	13
ARMOR CLASS:	3 (7)
MOVEMENT:	Fl 15 (C)
HIT DICE:	2
THAC0:	18
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6 (bite)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Bash
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	20%
SIZE:	T (1 Foot)
MORALE:	Elite (13)
XP VALUE:	270

Arcane heads are the severed heads of wanderers whose physical bodies die in the Nightmare Lands, specifically the Terrain Between. The heads are then magically animated by Mullonga, the aboriginal witch of the Nightmare Court. A flock of 13 arcane heads serve Mullonga, searching for physical wanderers traveling in the Nightmare Lands.

An arcane head looks much as it did in life, except that it has no body. Its eyes are empty and white, and a supernatural glow surrounds it. Its teeth are much sharper than those of a normal human, and its neck has been sewn shut where it was disconnected from its body. An arcane head moves through the power of magical flight, tracing mystical patterns in the air as it travels. When the mystic patterns of several heads are combined in a specific way, a portal opens through which Mullonga may travel to reach her ghastly servants.

The only sounds made by an arcane head are low, pathetic moans and the grinding of sharp teeth. It appears they can communicate with Mullonga in some way, but they do not speak or otherwise talk to their victims.

Combat: Arcane heads always attack in a flock, flying around their victims and darting in to bite or bash. On the first round of combat, the heads dive at a victim, trying to employ their special bash attack. A bash attack requires a successful attack roll. It is actually a magical attack that inflicts no physical damage. Instead, the victim must make a save vs. spell or be stunned by the touch of the head's arcane aura for 1d4+1 rounds. Stunned characters suffer automatic bite damage every round from any arcane heads that attack them.

Each head bites for 1d6 points of damage. The speed and small size of each head accounts for its Armor Class. If held in place (such as by a *web* spell), a head only has an AC 7.

In addition to flight and the bash attack, the heads use their arcane powers to open a magical portal controlled by Mullonga. It takes at least five heads spinning in unison for 1d4+1 rounds to open the portal. Mullonga can step through the portal or use it to transport wanderers into a dreamscape.

Habitat/Society: When not prowling the dark hours on behalf of their mistress, the flock of arcane heads rests in one of the tenements in Mullonga's ever-shifting Ghettoes. There are never more than 13 heads in the flock. If any are destroyed, the witch makes an effort to replace them as soon as possible. The heads serve as Mullonga's spies throughout the Terrain Between, checking on the activities of dream spawn, wanderers, and even the other members of the Nightmare Court. The heads specifically search for wanderers so that Mullonga can use them in her arcane experiments. If she has no immediate use for a wanderer, he or she is cast into a dreamscape for safekeeping.

Ecology: As supernatural creatures, arcane heads have no place in the natural order. They feed on the flesh of physical beings, preferring the taste of live wanderers though they also sustain themselves with the flesh of lost souls created in the Terrain Between.

Dr. Gregorian Illhousen

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Egertus, Nova Vaasa
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (17)
TREASURE:	Y
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral good
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	0-level human, 6 hp
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6+3 (silver rapier)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6-feet tall)
MORALE:	Elite (13)
XP VALUE:	35

S 9, D 8, C 14, I 17, W 16, Ch 15

Dr. Gregorian Illhousen is a large man in his early 50s. He has thick brown hair, a thick beard, large brown eyes, and a rotund figure. He wears round, thick spectacles. Illhousen is the chief physician of the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed in Egertus, Nova Vaasa. His primary area of expertise is sleep disorders and dream therapy.

Illhousen is a kind and compassionate man. He does have a temper, however, and he directs an unforgiving rage at those he believes jeopardize the welfare of his patients. He has developed new treatments for mental distresses that most other doctors consider ludicrous. His work is respected, though, for Illhousen has a remarkable success rate and a fine reputation as a caring and dedicated doctor. He calls his methods "psychology," while more traditional doctors continue to practice "conditioning" as the primary treatment for mental distress.

Dr. Illhousen speaks the common language of Nova Vaasa as well as a few other prominent languages of the core domains. He can also read a few ancient languages and scientific notations.

Combat: Dr. Illhousen is not a violent man. His only real weapon is his keen mind. Even under great stress, his training and intellect allow him to remain calm and collected. Except for dealing with violent patients, his only real adventures have occurred in the Nightmare Lands. When he took the first trip into the domain with Dr. Rudolph van Richten, the other doctor gave him a silver rapier as a gift. Although Illhousen hasn't learned to use it well, it has enchanted properties that can harm even the worst monsters. (Illhousen doesn't know about the enchantment, but the gift has great meaning to him.)

The silver rapier inflicts 1d6 points of damage, plus it causes additional damage due to its +3 magical bonus. This bonus is applied to both damage and attack rolls.

Habitat/Society: Illhousen spends most of his time at the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed. He sleeps on a worn

couch in his office, eats in the clinic's kitchen, and washes in the clinic's shower room. He doesn't sleep much, and has been known to work with patients from one dawn to the next.

The doctor owns a home in Egertus, but he rarely stays there. He checks on the place once every two weeks or so, usually when he goes to visit the rest of his family. When he needs to leave the clinic, he uses one of the horse-drawn carriages with the clinic's name painted on the side.

Dr. Illhousen is capable of dreamwalking himself and of helping others dreamwalk. He can thus send other characters' dream-selves into the dream plane. He does this occasionally to help patients he believes are in the grip of the Nightmare Court. To send a character's dream-self into the dream plane, Illhousen must first hypnotize the character. This requires Illhousen to make a Charisma check with a –2 penalty. The hypnotized character must then make a Wisdom check with a –4 penalty to actually dreamwalk. The character's dream-self returns to the waking world when the character wakes up or otherwise comes out of the hypnotic trance. Note that this doesn't teach the character how to dreamwalk; it just helps put him into that state for a limited amount of time. The trance lasts for 1 turn, though the time may seem longer or shorter in a dream.

Ecology: Most people think that Dr. Illhousen sleeps very little due to his obsession with his work. While this is partly true, there is also something darker at work. Illhousen has come under the scrutiny of the Nightmare Court with more frequency of late, so he tries to avoid sleeping (and thereby dreaming) as much as possible.

Dr. Harrod Tasker

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Egertus, Nova Vaasa
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (16)
TREASURE:	P
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	0-level human, 7 hp
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4 (dagger)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6-feet tall)
MORALE:	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	35

S 13, D 12, C 15, I 16, W 13, Ch 12

Dr. Harrod Tasker is a tall, thin man with a balding head and a cronish nose. He has thin, gray hair on the side of his head and wears reading spectacles on the edge of his nose. Tasker is a physician at the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed in Egertus, Nova Vaasa. He believes in conditioning his patients through punishments and rewards, thus he sees Illhousen's "psychology" as nothing but mumbo-jumbo.

Dr. Tasker has never been a compassionate man, but he has always been a dedicated doctor. He has a passion for knowledge, often using each patient he treats as an experimental subject. He punishes patients with the rack, rewards with sweets, and treats with shock therapy.

Dr. Tasker speaks the common language of Nova Vaasa as well as a few other prominent languages of the Core domains. He can also read scientific notations.

Combat: Tasker has a mean streak and a violent temper that he usually hides from the other members of the clinic's staff. Behind closed doors, when he works with his patients, he gives full reign to his temperament. He carries a dagger in a belt sheath in case his violence is ever returned.

Tasker also has contacts in Nova Vaasa's seedy taverns and riverside docks. If necessary, he can call upon 2d6 hoodlums (treat as 2nd-level rogues) to provide muscle for one of his plots.

Habitat/Society: Tasker arrives at the clinic every morning in his own horse and carriage. At the end of the day, he retires to his home in Egertus's richest neighborhood. He inherited his home from his grandfather, a prominent businessman in Egertus's past. The outside of the place looks as spotless and well-kept as Tasker himself, but the mess inside reflects the madness that has gripped the doctor.

Harrod Tasker has come under the influence of the Nightmare Court. Once he considered Illhousen to be a harmless fool with untenable visions. Now, thanks to the dreams he has been experiencing, he sees Illhousen as a dangerous fool who must be destroyed. The Nightmare Man himself appeared to Tasker and requested the doctor's help. "Illhousen cares nothing for the pursuit of scientific knowledge," the Nightmare Man explained. "He only cares for those shattered souls he calls patients."

Tasker's first job for the Nightmare Court was to provide a gateway through which the night terror called Mandalain could enter the waking world. Now he serves as the Court's eyes and ears, watching Illhousen and reporting on the things he is up to—especially things connected to his process called dream therapy.

When Tasker sleeps, his dream-self is drawn into the Nightmare Lands. There, he is allowed to roam the halls of the nightmare version of the Clinic—a place that Tasker calls the Egertus Asylum. While it looks like a nightmare to others, to Tasker the place is a dream. He serves as chief physician here, and a dream spawn wearing Illhousen's form rots in a cell ... until Tasker comes to administer treatments.

Ecology: Harrod Tasker is slowly going insane. This is the result of his dealings with the Nightmare Court, whose members are drawing energy from him while also using him as a tool in the waking world.

Tasker was always a neat and orderly individual. Some might say that he was obsessed with order. Now, while he appears as neat as always on the outside, his mind has become a chaotic jumble of thoughts of murder and revenge. His office and home show a similar interior, appearing as though a wild storm blew through them. In fact, one did. Its name was Harrod Tasker.

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Dream spawn are creatures native to the Nightmare Lands, combining the physical nature of the waking world with the malleable etherealness of the dream plane. All dream spawn, no matter their physical shape, appear as blank templates waiting for the imaginations of dreamers to temporarily define their forms. They can shift from featureless creatures to a specific form in an instant, copying that form exactly as it appears in the subconscious memories of a dreamer.

Dream spawn are divided into two categories: *lesser dream spawn* and *greater dream spawn*. There are a number of types in each category, but only the most prevalent are described here. These are the gray and shadow morphs in the lesser category, and the ennui in the greater category. A specific entry on each of these types follows this general information.

All dream spawn speak the same language. The words are spoken in quiet, soothing tones that make listeners from the waking world very sleepy. Some wanderers have described the language as reminiscent of the lullabies they heard as a child—not the words themselves, which few besides dream spawn understand, but the feelings of peace and comfort that they impart through tone and the quality of sound. A dream spawn can also speak the language of the dreamer or wanderer whose subconscious memories it taps.

A wanderer exposed to the natural language of lesser dream spawn becomes sluggish and weary. This is reflected by a –2 penalty to all attack rolls and ability checks unless a save vs. paralyzation is made. If the save fails, the sluggishness lasts for 1d4+1 rounds or for as long as at least one lesser dream spawn continues to speak (taking no other action).

The natural language of greater dream spawn has a more pronounced affect on wanderers. A wanderer who hears it must make a save vs. spells or suffer effects similar to a *sleep* spell with the following modifications: elves and creatures of up to 6+3 HD are affected by these sleep-inducing tones.

Only wanderers are affected by the language of dream spawn. Dreamers, as they are already asleep, are immune to the effects of the tranquil tones.

Special Powers: Because part of a dream spawn exists beyond the physical world, these creatures can only be hurt by enchanted weapons. The amount of enchantment required to damage a specific type of dream spawn is detailed in the individual entries.

In their natural forms, dream spawn attack with clawlike hands. The amount of damage these attacks cause and the number of attacks a specific type of dream spawn can make in a single round are defined in the individual entries which follow.

All dream spawn have the ability to assume forms pulled from the deepest memories of dreamers, or in rare instances from the subconscious minds of

wanderers. Where dreamers are concerned, dream spawn can draw on their memories at will. To access the memories of wanderers, dream spawn must first make physical contact and successfully employ their absorption power.

To use the absorption power, a dream spawn must make a successful attack roll to touch a wanderer with the suction-cup growths on its palms. This attack inflicts no physical damage. Instead, the victim loses 1d4+1 points of Intelligence (and all of the bonuses associated with his original score). This loss is temporary; a character regains Intelligence at a rate of 1 point per day. If absorption causes a character's Intelligence score to drop to 0, that character becomes incorporeal (essentially, the physical body becomes a dream body) until the lost Intelligence points are recovered. See *Book Two: The Rules of Dreams and Nightmares* for more details.

Through the absorption of a portion of a wanderer's Intelligence, a dream spawn gains the ability to assume forms from the wanderer's mind. Lesser dream spawn can make one successful absorption attack per day, greater dream spawn can make two.

When a dream spawn assumes a different form (which takes one round), it gains all of the strengths and weaknesses of that form. These strengths and weaknesses may not always be realistic, but they will always match the memories from which the form was drawn. For example, in human form a dream spawn can be injured by normal weapons.

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	High (14)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	9, Fl 24 (C)
HIT DICE:	8
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4 or 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6 x 4 or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Swoop, invisibility
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+3 or better weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	15%
SIZE:	M (6-feet tall)
MORALE:	Champion (16)
XP VALUE:	6,000

Ennui are greater dream spawn who serve the members of the Nightmare Court, actively controlling events occurring in dreamscapes while their masters are otherwise occupied. They can move freely across the Veil of Sleep, stepping between the waking world and the dreamscapes without trouble. Ennui are naturally wild and savage. The fear generated in dreamers by nightmares not only sustains ennui, it gives them control over their innate savagery.

An ennui appears as a large creature that can shift its form at will. In its natural form, it stands as tall as a man, has four arms, and batlike wings. Its skin is gray and featureless, able to change with fluidic ease. Ennui speak the language common to all dream spawn, as detailed in the general entry. An ennui can also speak the primary language of the dreamer or wanderer it draws memories from.

Combat: An ennui fights with its four clawlike hands. It can strike with all four claws in a single round, but can only target a single foe. Each claw inflicts 1d6 points of damage.

This type of greater dream spawn can also make a special swoop attack. It dives at an opponent from a great height, its wings spread wide. At the end of the swoop, the ennui attacks a single target with all four clawed hands and with its two clawed feet. All ennui claws inflict 1d6 points of damage, but the swoop provides a damage bonus of +2 to each successful attack. After all six attacks are made, the swooping ennui must land and spend the next two rounds resting its wings. It can continue to use other attack forms, but must wait at least two rounds before making another swoop attack.

If armed with a *dream slayer sword* (40% chance), an ennui can make two attacks per round. These attacks can be directed at one or two opponents. A *dream slayer sword* inflicts 1d10+4 damage to dreamers or 1d10+1 damage to wanderers.

An ennui in its natural form can become invisible at will. If it makes an attack it immediately becomes visible again. An ennui often becomes invisible after making a swoop attack to confuse its opponents.

Habitat/Society: Ennui hate other ennui and lord over all lesser dream spawn. They have no communities, but seek to serve the Nightmare Court. A vassal ennui is a dream spawn who has attached itself to the Court. Vassal ennui perform special missions for specific Court members and also serve as overseers of the dreamscapes. When a dreamer is emplaced as a seed in a dreamscape, an ennui is assigned to guard him and keep the nightmare flowing. Like wardens in prisons, ennui enforce the laws of their masters and administer to particular dreamscapes. They take this job very seriously and are prepared to die to fulfill it.

Rogue ennui are greater dream spawn who have not yet attached themselves to the Nightmare Court or who have been dismissed from their duties. These creatures are wild and extremely dangerous as they are denied access to fear-inducing nightmares.

Ecology: Ennui draw sustenance from the dream seeds they oversee. They can consume lesser dream spawn, but the sweet fear generated by the nightmares of dream seeds keep their wild sides in check.

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	Gray	Shadow
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	—The Nightmare Lands—	
FREQUENCY:	Common	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Group	Pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night	Night
DIET:	Special	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (7)	Very (11)
TREASURE:	Nil	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful neutral	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	4–24 (4d6)	1–4 (1d4)
ARMOR CLASS:	7	4
MOVEMENT:	6	12
HIT DICE:	3	5
THAC0:	17	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4	1d8/1d8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Absorption	Horror
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 to hit	+2 to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	S (4-feet tall)	M (5-feet)
MORALE:	Unsteady (7)	Elite (13)
XP VALUE:	420	975

Lesser dream spawn come in many varieties, but morphs are the type most often employed by the Nightmare Court. Two of the more prevalent types of morphs are gray morphs and shadow morphs.

Gray morphs populate the dreamscapes and roam the Terrain Between, functioning as the supporting cast in dreams and nightmares. It is not known if they serve this function in normal dream scenes or just in the dreamscapes of the Nightmare Lands.

A gray morph's natural form is that of a small, blank, featureless humanoid with long, gangly limbs and pale, gray flesh that is as malleable as water. In dreamscapes, gray morphs assume the forms of normal people, common animals, and even mundane objects to fill out the details of a dream. They can change form at will in a dreamscape due to the energy provided by a seed. In the Terrain Between, however, they need to draw on the memories of living, sentient beings through physical contact.

Morphs speak the language of all dream spawn, as well as the languages of the memory-forms they assume.

Combat: These dream spawn are cowards who hide behind the masks of change. They prefer not to fight, fleeing at the first sign of hostility. If forced into battle, they attack with their clawlike hands.

Habitat/Society: When not wearing the forms drawn from the minds of dreamers, gray morphs huddle in groups and wait for new memories to come along and give them purpose and roles to play. Otherwise, they have no society to speak of. They resent the greater dream spawn who lord over them.

Ecology: Gray morphs absorb memories and assume memory-forms to sustain themselves. They avoid greater spawn, who feast on the small creatures.

Shadow Morphs

Shadow morphs play major roles in nightmares, assuming the forms of whatever horrors haunt the recessed memories of dream seeds (of 5HD or less). Its natural form looks much like a gray morph, though its slightly larger, its flesh darker, and its featureless lines sharper and more frightening.

Combat: Shadow morphs are vicious, mean-spirited creatures that revel in causing pain and destruction while inducing heart-stopping fear. A shadow morph has a horror attack, a terrible screech that causes everyone who hears it and can see the morph's natural form to save vs. spells at –2 or be frozen with fear for 1d6+1 rounds. Those affected by the horror give off energy that sustains and fortifies a shadow morph. For each round that a victim is horror-struck, the fear-inducing morph regenerates 1 lost hit point.

Habitat/Society: Shadow morphs have no established society. Like other lesser dream spawn, they seek the dreams of others to give them form and substance. Unlike gray morphs, however, shadow morphs use their ability to assume memory-forms to generate even greater fear in their victims. They assume the forms of monsters or whatever memories most frighten a dreamer.

Ecology: Shadow morphs feed on fear, so they rarely kill their victims. Greater dream spawn sometimes feed on these dark creatures.

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Common
ORGANIZATION:	Swarm
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful neutral
NO. APPEARING:	3–18 (3d6)
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	9, Wb 12
HIT DICE:	1+1
THAC0:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 or better to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T (6-inch diameter)
MORALE:	Average (10)
XP VALUE:	420

Dreamweavers spin the stuff of dreams and nightmares, giving shape and substance to the scenes inside the dreamscapes. These spiderlike creatures come in two varieties: light-colored dream spinners and dark weavers who create the tapestries of nightmare.

Dreamweavers are spiders no bigger than 6-inches in diameter. The type that weaves beautiful silken dreams have light-colored bodies, usually the same color as the morning sky. The type that weaves nightmare webs have sleek bodies as dark as the deepest night. Both types have matching striped legs.

These spider creatures are not known to communicate with other races in any obvious way, though it does appears that they do communicate with each other. The Nightmare Man also seems able to communicate with at least the dark weavers, though whether this is a learned skill or some special power has never been confirmed.

Combat: Dreamweavers usually avoid direct contact with other creatures. They are not malicious or violent in any way. They only seem to be interested in weaving dreams and nightmares from the raw material churning in the minds of dreamers.

When forced to defend themselves, the spiders can deliver a relatively weak bite that inflicts 1 point of damage. The poison that accompanies the bite is not weak, however. It causes victims to immediately fall into a deep, comalike sleep. Dreamers who are bitten are not affected by the poison directly, but their physical bodies fall into a deeper sleep. Once a victim falls asleep, the dreamweavers flee.

A wanderer bitten by a dreamweaver must make a saving throw vs. poison to withstand the poison's effects.

Failure causes the victim to fall unconscious for 1d4 hours. An unconscious victim cannot be revived until the poison has run its course. While in this state the victim experiences intense dreams or nightmares, depending on what dreamweaver bit him.

A dreamer bitten by a dreamweaver also makes a save vs. poison. The effects are the same as for wanderers, except that the dreamer's physical body suffers and not his dream-self. This increases the length of the dreamer's sleeping period and keeps him trapped in the dream for that much longer (see the rules book for details on dreamers and dreams).

If dreamweavers are ever exposed to sunlight or bright illumination of similar intensity, they fade away like the morning dew—or a fleeting dream.

Habitat/Society: Dreamweavers live in swarms consisting of one variety of the dream creatures. Many swarms of both types may occupy a single dreamscape, spinning the fabric of the dreams and nightmares playing out inside the sphere. From one side, the weave looks like any location from the real world. From the other, it appears as it truly is—a woven dream of stars and light or a nightmare web of skulls and dark horrors.

Dreamers and wanderers will almost never see dreamweavers. They stay behind the scenes, weaving the patterns of dreamscapes just out of view.

Ecology: Like other creatures of the dream plane, dreamweavers draw sustenance from dreamers.

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5)
TREASURE:	O
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	6
HIT DICE:	4+4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4+4 × 4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Bite, fear
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Regeneration
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6-feet tall)
MORALE:	Steady (12)
XP VALUE:	975

Lost souls are the animated mortal remains of wanderers who die in the Nightmare Lands. Different types of lost souls can be encountered in both the Terrain Between and in the dreamscapes.

When a wanderer dies in the Terrain Between, there is a chance (40%) that the innate power of the land will cause the remains to rise as a zombie-like being called a lost soul. Once a lost soul is created, it immediately searches for others of its undead kind. When it finds them, it merges with them to become a single entity made up of the tangled, rotting bodies of many dead wanderers. The faces of the dead wanderers peer out from the central mass, looking wretched and as pained as the moans they emit. Once merged, the individual wanderers are subsumed into the newly created lost soul. Physical lost souls cannot enter dreamscapes.

A wanderer who dies in a dreamscape has a chance (60%) to become a somewhat different type of lost soul. A lost soul animated in a dreamscape is more insubstantial, more ghostlike. Like the zombie lost soul, the dream lost soul seeks out others of its kind and merges to form a mass of writhing, moaning spirits. Insubstantial lost souls can move from one dreamscape to another, but they cannot survive in the Terrain Between. For every hour that an insubstantial lost soul remains in the Terrain Between, it must make a save vs. death magic to keep from waning away. Each hour beyond the first, a cumulative –2 penalty is applied to the save. Thus, after three hours the save would be made at –4.

These are the only differences between physical and insubstantial lost souls. They are the same in all other respects.

Lost souls do not communicate. A lost soul does produce an eerie groan that consists of many voices merged into one. These groans induce fear in those who hear them.

Combat: A lost soul fights with two claw attacks. If both claw attacks hit the same target in the same round, it makes a third attack roll to try to bite (1d6 damage). Physical lost souls cannot harm dreamers, and insubstantial lost souls cannot harm wanderers.

A lost soul regenerates hit points every round; 1 hit point is regained for every undead wanderer the lost soul consists of. As few as 2 or as many as 8 undead can merge to form a single lost soul (2d4).

For each undead wanderer inside a lost soul, increase the Hit Dice by 1+1, damage by +1, AC by 1, THAC0 by 1, and number of attacks by 1. Therefore, the most powerful lost soul has 8+8 HD, inflicts 1d4+8 damage per attack, has an AC of 3, a THAC0 of 13, and makes 8 attacks.

Habitat/Society: Lost souls roam the Nightmare Lands, seeking living wanderers to add to their tangled masses until they reach their maximum expansion (8 wanderers). While each tortured member of a lost soul has a fleeting memory of its previous existence, the undead creature has a single mind full of chaotic images and hatred of the living.

Ecology: Lost souls have no place in the ecology. They go into a frenzy when they see living beings, seeking to reclaim the warm spark of life that they have lost. Physical lost souls are hunted by arcane heads, who require flesh to sustain themselves.

Men, Abber Shaman

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (16)
TREASURE:	U
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	8 (10)
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	3
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Spells
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6½ feet tall)
MORALE:	Steady (12)
XP VALUE:	270

Abber shamans are the holy men and women of the Abber nomad tribes. The shamans, like the rest of the Abbers, dwell in the dread Nightmare Lands, specifically in the Forest of Everchange. However, the mad paths that the shamans walk make them outcasts among outcasts, cut off from the rest of Abber society.

Abber shamans look like any other Abber nomads. They are tall and well-muscled, forged in a harsh land and tempered by the madness around them. Shamans dress in hides taken from fantastic dream creatures and horrifying nightmare beasts, giving them a surreal appearance. They wield weapons made from wood and stone such as spears, and decorate the few possessions they carry with colorful feathers.

The shamans speak the same unique and alien language as the rest of the Abbers. Many shamans also learn more comprehensible languages from the dreamscapes they study, thus allowing them to communicate with wanderers and dreamers.

Combat: Abber shamans are priests. They have the same abilities and spells as other types of priests. Abber shamans, however, cannot turn undead. Instead, they have the ability to banish dream spawn. Use the Hit Dice portion of the Turning Undead table from the *Player's Handbook* to determine a shaman's chances of banishing a dream spawn. A "D" result not only drives a dream spawn off, but it causes it to revert to its natural form (if it was wearing a memory-form pulled from a dreamer's mind).

In addition to weapons and priest spells, Abber shamans have a few special abilities. These are gained through level advancement as described below.

Detect Dream Spawn: At 3rd level, a shaman gains the ability to identify a creature as either a dreamer, a wanderer, or a dream spawn. The base chance is 25% plus 2% per level. In the case of dream spawn, the shaman also has a chance of knowing its strengths and weaknesses (10% plus 2% per level).

Create Dreamcatcher: At 7th level, a shaman develops the skill to build a *dreamcatcher*, the magical talismans that locate paths through the nether portals of the dreamscapes. See the rules book for more information on these devices.

Dreamwalking: At 9th level, a shaman gains the ability to enter a deep trance and send his dream-self into the dreams of those sleeping in the waking world. A successful Wisdom check with a –4 modifier is required to accomplish this. Dreamwalking can be attempted once per day. The trance lasts for 1 turn per level of the dreamwalker. While in this type of trance, a shaman's body is vulnerable to any terrors of the Nightmare Lands that come across it.

Habitat/Society: While Abber nomads reject the reality of everything around them, Abber shamans seek to embrace the madness and discover the truth of the world. For this obvious rejection of Abber culture, shamans are never allowed to live within Abber communities. Their curiosity and bizarre habits attract too much attention from the denizens of nightmare for the rest of the tribe to feel safe.

Ecology: Like all Abbers, shamans survive in the bizarre environment as hunters and gatherers. Unlike their fellows, Abber shamans seek to understand the madness and learn about the world around them.

Night Terror, Mandalain

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Clinic in Egertus
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (15)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	9
THAC0:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8+2/1d8+2
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Energy drain
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 weapon or better to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	10%
SIZE:	M (5 1/2-feet tall)
MORALE:	Steady (12)
XP VALUE:	6,000

The night terror called Mandalain has two distinct forms. Both of these forms have ghostly qualities. The first form is that of a beautiful young woman with long brown hair and dressed in a nurse's uniform. This is how the real Mandalain looked in life. The second form is more terrifying. Her uniform becomes stained and tattered. Her hair turns wild and white streaks appear within it. Her eyes, once big and expressive, become empty pools of shadow. Her long, slender fingers take on the most dramatic change; they become surgical scalpels.

This Mandalain isn't the ghost of the real nurse. This is a night terror constructed by the Nightmare Man from the images in Dr. Illhousen's nightmares. The creature's sole purpose is to enter the waking world and torment Illhousen as it haunts his clinic.

The night terror never speaks, but it sometimes screams with such pain and agony that it sounds like Mandalain is being killed again.

Combat: Mandalain's scalpel hands inflict 1d8+2 points of damage when they hit, and both hands can strike in the same round. Any victim hit for maximum damage (10 points) must make a save vs. death magic or Mandalain drains 1 experience level.

The night terror can turn incorporeal at will unless in the light of the rose of midnight (see below). While incorporeal, it can't make any attacks, but neither can it be attacked. In all cases, only weapons of +1 or better can harm it. As it is not a true ghost, it can't be turned.

Habitat/Society: When the real Nurse Mandalain was slain by a patient at the clinic, her friend Dr. Illhousen was plagued by terrible nightmares. Some of these stemmed from the fact that the nurse had been killed with his own scalpels. The Nightmare Man took images from the nightmares and created this night terror. It has one purpose—to break Illhousen's will. It has one weakness—the rose of midnight.

Ecology: The night terror Mandalain has no place in the ecologies of either the waking world or the Nightmare Lands. It is a special construct designed by the Nightmare Man. It does require power, however. It gets this power by using its energy drain ability on living beings. It returns to the Nightmare Lands every day, only prowling the waking world in the middle of the night.

The Rose of Midnight: All night terrors have a special weakness. If the weakness isn't exploited, a night terror can't truly be destroyed. Mandalain's weakness is a special flower that grows in only one place in the Nightmare Lands. It's called the rose of midnight. The rose grows in the middle of an empty lot situated between two tenements in Mullonga's Ghettoes. When the moon reaches the highest point in the sky each night, the rose of midnight blooms.

When the flower blooms, its open petals release a bright, cleansing light. The light reaches for 30 feet in all directions, and anything within the light is affected by the equivalent of a *protection from evil* spell. In addition, the light causes members of the Nightmare Court to flee for 1d6 turns. The rose remains in bloom for one hour, then its petals close for another night.

Once picked, the rose continues to function in the same manner for 1d6+1 days. Then it dies. A new rose grows in the lot 1d4+1 days after the rose dies.

As Mandalain's special weakness, the rose's light has an additional power. While the light shines upon Mandalain, the night terror can't turn incorporeal. The night terror can be destroyed while the light shines upon it. This is the only way in which Mandalain can truly be defeated.

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The Nightmare Court is comprised of at least six distinct members, though there may be more who have yet to be identified. They dwell in the Nightmare Lands, each controlling a specific location in the domain.

One member of the Court, a being called the Nightmare Man, appears to be more powerful than the rest and possibly even the Court's leader. It is not known if the Nightmare Man is the sole lord of this domain, however, or if he shares this role with the entire Court. Some have even speculated that the Court is simply made up of different aspects of the Nightmare Man's personality, each given substance by the curse which binds him to the domain.

In any case, the Nightmare Lands' proximity to the Veil of Sleep gives the Court access to the dreams of people across the multiverse—not just those trapped within the Demiplane of Dread. The members of the Court cannot escape from the domain by crossing the Veil of Sleep, but they can pull dreamers into their mad realm.

The Web of Dreams: The Nightmare Court spins a mystical web whose center is the Nightmare Lands and whose threadlike filaments reach out beyond the Veil of Sleep. In the dream plane, that place which touches all worlds and is visited by the dream-selves of all people as they sleep, these mystic filaments touch the passions and pathos of every dreamer. The dreams send vibrations back toward the center of the web, carrying with them images and enotions that the Nightmare Court's members can interpret.

Only dreams that have cores of darkness interest the Nightmare Court. The mystic web is designed to entangle such dreams and hold them for a time. A dreamer can eventually pull free of the sticky filaments, but as long as the dreamer remains entangled the web-caught nightmare plays out over and over. This may happen over the course of a single evening or through as many as six nights of troubled sleep (1d6) before the dreamer breaks free.

While trapped in the mystic web, a dreamer's dream essence provides nourishment to the Nightmare Court. Dreamers caught in this manner lose 1 point of Intelligence every night. This loss is temporary; lost points return at a rate on 1 point per day once the dreamer is no longer connected to the mystic web. See the rules book for more details.

During the period that a dreamer is trapped in the Nightmare Court's web, he or she may come under the direct scrutiny of a Court member. The member sorts through the images of the dark dreams, looking for the vibrant terrors that grow best in the fertile soil of the Nightmare Lands.

Fantastic musings bordering on madness inspire Court members, as well as recent and extreme trauma and tremendous grief. These are the criteria a member uses to determine if a dreamer is seed quality. If so, the dreamer is pulled down the mystic web and imprisoned in a dreamscape, where his troubled visions serve as the seeds for dream scenes.

Each member of the Court has a specific relic that serves as his or her connection to the Web of Dreams. This relic is usually hidden and protected, for the mystic energies that bind it to the web are easy to disturb. If the connection is severed, a Court member is temporarily weakened until the connection can be restored. Some believe that severing the connection is the first step necessary to destroy such a creature. See the rules book for more details on the web, relics, and the Court.

Common Powers: Though each member of the Court has his or her own special abilities, they all share certain common powers. These are described below.

Terrain Change: A member of the Court can cause the land to change in an instant. Within a dreamscape this power has almost no limits. A Court member can automatically pull images from a dreamer's mind and use them to reshape the dream scene. In the Terrain Between, a Court member can only change the appearance of his or her particular area of influence. These changes are also given shape by the dreams of those trapped within the dreamscapes.

Inspire Madness: Court members can reach into a character's mind to unleash the emotions and unnamed terrors that inspire madness, thus requiring an immediate madness check. This power can be used on a specific character once per day.

Dreamwalking: All Court members have the ability to enter a deep trance and send their dream-selves into the dream plane. They follow the threads of the mystic web to gaze upon the dreams of the waking world beyond their cursed shores.

Teleport Without Error: Court members can use this spell-like power at will in their areas of influence, but are limited to three times per day in other parts of the Nightmare Lands. Court members can instantly teleport throughout the City of Nod and the Forest of Everchange, into specific dreamscapes, and even to the Outlands on the shores of the Nocturnal Sea. However, no member may teleport directly into another member's lair or into their direct area of influence (a 30-foot-diameter circle around each Court member).

Regeneration: As long as a Court member's connection to the mystic web remains intact, he or she can draw on the energy of the dreams caught in the web to heal damage. A Court member heals 1d4+1 points of damage per round automatically; no effort must be expended on the Court member's part to use this power.

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (16)
TREASURE:	A
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0 or 6
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	12
THAC0:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8+2 × 4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Dance, chilling touch
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+3 weapon or better to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	40%
SIZE:	M (5½ feet tall)
MORALE:	Champion (15)
XP VALUE:	10,000

The Ghost Dancer is perhaps the most tragic member of the Nightmare Court. As her name implies, she is an incorporeal creature who now searches the nightmares of the living in an effort to understand her own death. Dreams inspired by guilt and shame interest her the most, drawing her with the same inescapable pull as a flame exerts over a moth.

The Ghost Dancer appears as an ethereal and strikingly beautiful young woman in her late teens or early 20s. She is translucent, with pale flesh that looks cold and dead. Her short, blond hair is as devoid of color as her alabaster skin. Above pale, full lips, her eyes are hidden beneath perpetual shadow. This grim specter wears a tattered, faded ballerina's costume. Pale blood stains cover its once-elegant designs; some shapeless splatters, others ominous hand prints that hint at foul violence in the distant past. She is as beautiful as she is insubstantial, with wisps of ghostly mist rising off her transparent form.

The Ghost Dancer never speaks. Dark bruises on her neck could indicate that she lost the capacity in whatever violent act ended her corporeal life, but the details of that event remain a mystery. She does communicate, however, through her expressive and haunting dances. Unfortunately, to view such a dance usually indicates that the Ghost Dancer has marked the audience—and those so marked rarely live long enough to tell others what they saw.

Combat: The Ghost Dancer does not make a habit of engaging in physical battle. When such efforts are called for, however, she has a number of offensive powers at her command. First, unless she semi-materializes, she can only be attacked by dreamers or others on the Ethereal Plane.

On the Ethereal or dream planes, the Ghost Dancer has an AC 6. If semi-materialized, her AC is 0. Only enchanted weapons of +3 or better can harm her.

The Ghost Dancer's preferred method of attack is her chilling touch. She can make one such attack in a round, causing 1d4 points of damage and draining 1 point of Strength from her victim. These lost Strength points are regained at a rate of 1 per day unless the victim is drained to 0 points. A victim drained to 0 Strength points becomes paralyzed and is immediately teleported to the Theater Macabre. There, the victim sits until death overcomes him and he becomes a permanent member of the audience. Such a victim perishes in a number of days equal to his Constitution score –1d4 unless he is rescued and a *remove curse* is cast upon him. Until the curse is lifted, the victim cannot regain lost Strength points.

If pressed, the Ghost Dancer has a more lethal attack form, called the Dance Macabre. This dance is a wild yet beautiful combination of fluid movement and ghostly music. All within 30 feet of the Ghost Dancer when she begins the dance must make saving throws vs. paralyzation at –4 or be frozen in awe. The dance lasts 6 rounds and can be performed twice per day. During the dance, two ghostly scimitars appear in her hands. She makes 4 attacks per round with these blades, hitting up to four different targets.

The Ghost Dancer is considered special for purposes of turning.

Habitat/Society: The Ghost Dancer's area of influence is the Theater Macabre in the City of Nod.

Ecology: The Ghost Dancer draws energy from dreams of guilt and shame.

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Supra-genius (19)
TREASURE:	A
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	0
HIT DICE:	11
THAC0:	Nil
NO. OF ATTACKS:	0
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Nil
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Sleep, charm, gate
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+3 weapon or better to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	60%
SIZE:	M (6 feet tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17)
XP VALUE:	13,000

Hypnos is sleep personified, the one member of the Nightmare Court who never leaves his bed of glass. This villain favors dreams of inadequacy and frustration, seeking to destroy a dreamer's self-esteem through endless nocturnal episodes. He also has the ability to affect the waking world through a combination of suggestion and mesmerism.

Hypnos appears as a gentleman of high station, a tall man dressed in impeccably tailored suits. His black hair and thick mustache are always perfectly trimmed and neat. A monocle connected to his vest pocket by a gold chain covers his right eye. He is always seen in eternal slumber, resting within a glass coffin, his arms folded peacefully across his chest. Only his right eye, the one behind the monocle, is ever open. Indeed, it never closes, but is instead filled with a maniacal light. Although he appears to be dead, Hypnos is not an undead creature.

Though Hypnos's mouth never moves, his voice continuously whispers throughout his lonely tower like a chill autumn breeze. It speaks to wanderers and dreamers alike, taunting and ridiculing them while also urging them to commit terrible acts of violence.

Combat: Hypnos has no physical means of attack, but he has other weapons available. The Spire of Sleep, Hypnos's lair in the City of Nod, has formidable defenses of its own, as described in the rules book. If a wanderer should breach these defenses, then Hypnos is forced to make use of his own powers.

Both Hypnos and his glass coffin can only be damaged by weapons of +3 enchantment of better. The coffin has 40 hit points.

Hypnos can *gate* an ennui or other servant to his side at will when he needs minions to protect him.

Hypnos can induce sleep by whispering a drowsy lullaby. He can use this power three times per day, directing the sleep-inducing tones either within a particular dreamscape or inside the Spire of Sleep. Everyone within the affected area must save vs. spell or fall into a deep sleep for 1d6+1 turns. A *dispel magic* cast on a victim will awaken him early. A wanderer affected by this magical sleep has his dream-self thrust into a dreamscape. A dreamer who fails the save is paralyzed and his physical body drops into a deep coma for the duration of the effect.

This Court member is a master of mesmerism. He can bend another's will, planting subconscious suggestions in dreamers or literally controlling the mind of a wanderer. If Hypnos directs his will at a target, that target makes a Wisdom check at –6 to fight off his influence. Hypnos can bend the wills of as many as six victims at a time. Dreamers who fail the save receive a single subconscious command that manifests in the waking world. The command can take any form, but commands that force characters to behave against their alignments get an additional Wisdom check (this time at –2) to overcome the suggestion. Wanderers behave as if *charmed* until Hypnos releases them or they succeed at the Wisdom –6 check (attempts can be made once per turn).

Habitat/Society: Hypnos resides in the Spire of Sleep in the City of Nod, a place that seems to be a living extension of its master. See the rules book for details.

Ecology: Dreams of failure and humiliation feed Hypnos, and he cultivates dreamers to provide a fertile crop of frustration and inadequacy.

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (17)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	12, Fl 12 (B)
HIT DICE:	12
THAC0:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4+2
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Change form, gate
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+2 or better to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	60%
SIZE:	M (6 feet tall)
MORALE:	Steady (12)
XP VALUE:	12,000

Morpheus is one of the strangest members of the Nightmare Court, a chaotic imp who loves to confuse, confound, and shock the dreamers who provide the energy to sustain him.

Morpheus is a red-skinned, powerfully built male with dark hair and eyes, a thin mustache, and pointed ears. He adorns himself in expensive, formal suits, though only from the waist up. His lower body tapers off into vaporous trails.

Due to his connection to the dream plane, Morpheus can speak any language he has ever come in contact with.

Combat: Though he appears physically strong, Morpheus is not a fighter. His huge fist can inflict 1d4+2 points of damage, but this member of the Court rarely resorts to such crude methods. In addition to the common powers he shares with the rest of the Nightmare Court, Morpheus has his own special abilities to call upon.

Morpheus has the ability to fly, and he uses it to stay out of the reach of any who would strike him physically. When a situation presents itself that requires brute force, Morpheus has the power to gate an ennui or shadow morph to his side at will. All morphs must obey the commands of this Court member, and he can control 15 HD of the creatures at a time.

Perhaps Morpheus's most potent personal power is his ability to *change form*. He can use this power on himself or on others, and it seems to work much like the common *terrain change* power, but with a broader application. There are three primary ways Morpheus can use the *change form* power: on himself, on his minions, or on his victims.

Morpheus can *change form* into any creature once per round. The power functions like the *polymorph self* spell except that Morpheus gains all of the powers, abilities, and weaknesses of the form he assumes. He can become any creature with 12 HD or less. He enjoys turning into dragons or other beasts with ranged attacks.

When used on a minion, *change form* can turn a morph into a monster up to 2 HD more powerful than its natural state. For example, a shadow morph can be altered to become a terrifying creature with 7 HD instead of 5 HD, or an ennui into a 10 HD monster instead of 8 HD.

If used on wanderers or dreamers, *change form* is employed to increase the chaos and confusion of the moment. The victim gets no saving throw, but also does not need to make a system shock check. The new form lasts for 1d2+1 rounds. Morpheus enjoys forcing his victims to assume the forms of loved ones or despised enemies, of nameless people who loved ones do not recognize, or even hapless creatures unable to stand against the horror of the moment.

Habitat/Society: Morpheus controls the Forest of Everchange, where he wanders aimlessly when not observing events in a dreamscape. Abber shamans call him the Changing Man, for the forest warps into a different place in the wake of his passage.

Ecology: Morpheus cannot tolerate order or stability. If the world around him is not caught up in a storm of change, Morpheus becomes bored and depressed. He revels in confusion and change—especially change brought about through misery. He feeds on dreams of madness, where scenes shift for no reason and patterns cannot be detected.

Mullonga

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (17)
TREASURE:	D
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	13
THAC0:	7
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d6/2d6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+2 or better to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	40%
SIZE:	M (5 feet tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (18)
XP VALUE:	11,000

The aboriginal witch Mullonga is one of the most active members of the Nightmare Court. She may look like an old woman who is so small as to be harmless, but she is evil and malicious. She thrives on the fear and apprehension of others.

Mullonga appears as a hunched, leathery, brown-skinned old woman dressed in animal skins and carrying a gnarled staff. Her flesh looks as if it has been parched in the hottest desert, beneath a blazing, unforgiving sun. As no visible sun shines over the Nightmare Lands, perhaps it is the pure evil that emanates from this witch that withers her flesh so.

Her connection to the dream plane gives Mullonga access to many languages, all of which are spoken with a voice as dry and brittle as a mummy's wrappings.

Combat: Mullonga often attempts to insinuate herself into a company of wanderers, using illusions to cast herself as a mage lost in the mists. If she is accepted into a company, she begins to sow false information. She does this in an effort to create fear in the wanderers—fear she can later use in dreams.

If forced into physical conflict, Mullonga's gnarled hands become grotesquely extended claws that can strike twice in a round and inflict 2d6 points of damage each. While she has no problem with personally spilling blood, she prefers to use spells or minions to handle most victims.

Mullonga has the arcane powers of a 13th-level wizard, though her connection to the dream plane allows her to cast spells in an instant; she has no need of material, somatic, or verbal components. Further, she does not memorize spells in the same manner as mortal wizards.

Mullonga pulls her spells from the dream web, so she can fill up her spell selection in one hour. She needs to return to a secure location in the Ghettoes and make physical contact with her relic, so those she is terrorizing may rest a short period while she is thus engaged.

The witch normally has the following list of spells ready, but she can choose from all spells available to her experience level. 1st level—*burning hands, change self, chill touch, hypnotism, magic missile*; 2nd level—*alter self, blindness, ESP, scare, spectral hand;* 3rd level—*delude, fireball, hold person, protection from good, 10 feet radius, slow*; 4th level—*confusion, Evard's black tentacles, fear, polymorph self*; 5th level—*chaos, distance distortion, shadow magic, summon shadow*; 6th level—*invisible stalker, permanent illusion.*

Mullonga is served by ennui, arcane heads, and a variety of golems and other arcane creations.

Habitat/Society: Mullonga controls the Ghettoes in the City of Nod. The shifting streets of this roving neighborhood are an extension of the witch. See the rules book for more information.

In the Ghettoes, Mullonga has a number of workshops where she can conduct her arcane experiments. These experiments have seen the creation of the arcane heads and other terrors that now serve the witch. Of course, the Ghettoes are also haunted by things that did not turn out the way the witch had planned.

Ecology: Mullonga thrives on fear, and her dream-scapes are sinister, terror-filled locations. In the Terrain Between, she constantly searches for wanderers to fuel her arcane

The Nightmare Man

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Supra-genius (19)
TREASURE:	E
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	–2
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	14
THAC0:	7
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d2+3/1d2+3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Dream fire, shadow walk
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+3 or better to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	60%
SIZE:	M (6-feet tall)
MORALE:	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	13,000

The mysterious entity known as the Nightmare Man rules over the Nightmare Court from his lair in the Grieving Cathedral. It is the Nightmare Man's curse that gives shape to this domain and binds the rest of the Court to the land.

The Nightmare Man wears dark, tattered robes, a hood always drawn over his head. The hood's shadows hide his face, though long wisps of silver hair spill from the dark opening. Only his hands emerge from the folds of the robes, and these appear as gnarled, pale appendages that are more skeletal than flesh. The robes are spun from the webs of dark dreamweavers, and dozens of these spider creatures crawl across their fraying surface.

The Nightmare Man can speak any language he has ever encountered in the dreams of his multitude of victims. When he speaks, his raspy voice sounds like a faint wind blowing through a dead forest of dry leaves and brittle branches. It carries with it a chill that no fire can eliminate.

Combat: The Nightmare Man rarely engages in physical battle. He can deliver two punches per round, each inflicting 1d2+3 points of damage. If pressed, his more formidable attack form is the terrible dream fire that is his alone to command.

Dream fire is a crackling green energy that leaps from the Nightmare Man's skeletal hands to bathe victims in cold terror. The Nightmare Man can call upon dream fire once every three rounds of combat. It explodes from his gnarled fingers in a straight line that is five feet wide and extends as far as 30 feet. All targets within its path must make saving throws vs. breath weapon or suffer its effects. Those who make the save suffer only half damage.

Dream fire inflicts 4d10 points of damage to those who fail the save. Those who succeed receive half damage. In addition, those who fail suffer further effects from the cold fire. The green energy opens the subconscious stores of its victim's mind, unleashing feelings of absolute terror. Such a victim must make an immediate horror check. No matter what the result of the check is, the victim is shaken by the unleashing of imagined terrors. The victim suffers a –2 penalty to all attack rolls and ability checks for 1d4 rounds.

The Nightmare Man has the ability to travel through shadows. By shadow walking, he can step into a deep shadow in the Grieving Cathedral and step out of a shadow in the Forest of Everchange—or anywhere else within the borders of his domain.

In addition to the dark dreamweavers that crawl over him like living adornments, the Nightmare Man is served by six powerful ennui he refers to as "the Horrors." The Horrors oversee the Nightmare Man's six permanent dreamscapes, keeping them running so that their master is never without dream images to draw from.

The Nightmare Man also has the ability to create night terrors, nightmares given substance and independence so that they may roam beyond the Veil of Sleep—even able to enter the waking world for periods of time. The creature Mandalain, a nightmare that continues to haunt Dr. Illhousen, is an example of a night terror.

The Nightmare Man has the ability to sense intruders in his lair or in the lairs of the other members of the Nightmare Court. He often deals directly with those who find the courage to enter his Grieving Cathedral, but even events in the other lairs interest him. He will often travel through the

shadows to another member's lair when he senses an intruder there. From the shadows, he will secretly watch the events as they unfold. The Nightmare Man rarely interferes in such happenings, but he enjoys watching so that he can be on hand to inhale the sweet vapors of fear that almost always accompany such occurrences.

Habitat/Society: The Nightmare Man spends most of his time wandering the halls of the Grieving Cathedral in the City of Nod. In the stained glass windows of the ancient structure, he can watch the events unfolding in every dreamscape in the Ring of Dreams. Wanderers who happen to view the moving images within the ornate glass windows must make madness checks to keep from going insane. For the images are not the masked scenes that a dreamer sees, but instead show the subconscious in its pure, unfiltered reality.

When a particularly inspiring scene presents itself, the Nightmare Man sets up an easel and canvas and gathers his brush and palette. He attempts to paint one of the moments of horror, or even some half-glimpsed wonderful dream, but such creativity eludes him. It has been said that the Nightmare Man is an artist without talent, a frustrated creator without the least spark of creativity. In truth, he has no imagination at all, no dreams of his own. He must borrow the dreams and nightmares of others, but even these can only be viewed from a distance. He cannot even participate in these dreams except as an observer.

Whenever the mood to create strikes him, the Nightmare Man touches brush to canvas and hopes that this time something different will occur. His curse, however, cannot be denied. Paint turns to blood, dripping down the otherwise white canvas in an ever-spreading stain. This angers and frustrates the Nightmare Man, sending him into a destructive, frightening rage.

One portion of the Grieving Cathedral is set aside as a meeting place for the Nightmare Court. The Consistory Court, to the right of the Altar of Dreams, is the Nightmare Court's place within the Nightmare Man's lair. How often the Court gathers is unknown, as is what agenda occupies their collective time. What is known is that such a gathering is never called for the benefit of others, but to debate new methods for inspiring fear in the minds of all dreamers.

Ecology: Though he has the appearance of an undead creature, the Nightmare Man does not exhibit any of the characteristics that usually mark an undead. Most notably, he cannot be turned by clerics. The Nightmare Man feeds on the dreams and nightmares of others. Unlike the other members of the Court who have specific areas of interest, all dreams and nightmares provide nourishment to the Nightmare Man. As long as there is a negative emotion attached to it, any dream provides energy to this cursed villain.

The Nightmare Man also craves the raw spark of creativity and imagination that others possess, as he has little of his own to draw upon. He cannot use these borrowed sparks, however, and this frustrates and enrages him to no end.

Night Terrors

The Nightmare Man has the ability to give substance and form to the worst nightmares he glimpses in the Web of Dreams. These nightmares receive a portion of the Nightmare Man's own power, thus giving them the ability to exist beyond the Veil of Sleep.

A night terror can appear in almost any form. From an undead nurse with bladed fingers to a foul murderer who strangles his victims with a supple cord, the worst fears made real become the night terrors. Though they serve their master, each night terror has a level of independence and intelligence that makes it a unique creature. A night terror might have a specific target to torment or frighten, but the methods it uses are often those of its own devising.

It takes the Nightmare Man one full night to construct a night terror, and only one night terror can be shaped during that time. The night terror is born within a dreamscape, filled with every aspect of the nightmare that shapes it. A lesser dream spawn, specifically a shadow morph, serves as the basis for a night terror. The morph loses all of its own powers and personality in the process, becoming a unique night terror. It remains a night terror until it is destroyed.

The Nightmare Man must invest a part of himself in every night terror he creates. This forges a link with the creature through which the Nightmare Man can observe events as they occur, summon the night terror to his side, or even issue commands. The link does not extend beyond the borders of the Nightmare Lands, however, so night terrors in the waking world are on their own. All the Nightmare Man receives through the link is scattered impressions of what the night terror is up to. No detailed images make it back through the mists.

Depending on the power level of the night terror being created, the Nightmare Man suffers a temporary decrease in his own powers during the night of creation. Investing a night terror with a reality that can last beyond the Veil of Sleep costs the Nightmare Man hit points. These hit points cannot be regained until the following night; even the regenerative power of the web of dreams cannot begin to restore them until the next night starts. The number of hit points lost is variable, based on the Hit Dice of the night terror being created: 1–3 HD, 1d8 hp; 4–6 HD, 2d8 hp; 7–9 HD, 3d8 hp; 10 HD, 4d8 hp. No night terror more powerful than 10 Hit Dice can be created by the Nightmare Man.

Each night terror is created with a specific weakness that is based upon the nightmare it was drawn from. What can be used to destroy one night terror will not necessarily harm another.

The Rainbow Serpent

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Nightmare Lands
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (16)
TREASURE:	C
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	–1
MOVEMENT:	9, Fl 6 (C)
HIT DICE:	10
THAC0:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4+1
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison, suggestion
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 or better to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	40%
SIZE:	S (4 feet long)
MORALE:	Steady (12)
XP VALUE:	10,000

The Rainbow Serpent is perhaps the most enigmatic member of the Nightmare Court simply because the creature wears a nonhumanoid form. It is a reclusive entity who sows the seeds of mistrust and suspicion among the dreamscapes it controls.

This winged serpent is only four feet long, with brilliant red scales interrupted by bands of yellow, black, and deep blue. Its eyes are full of malevolent intelligence, and its mouth seems to be curled in a perpetual smile. If dreamers remember anything about this villain, it is this leering, mocking smile.

The Rainbow Serpent can speak any language it has ever encountered in the dreams of others. It does not actually speak, but instead projects the words and ideas it wishes to communicate directly into the minds of its audience. Within these minds, the listeners are never sure what ideas well up from their own subconscious and what comes from the seditious liar with the rainbow-hued scales.

Combat: This Court member rarely involves itself in direct physical confrontation. It prefers to let its dream spawn take on forms that inspire paranoia in any groups of wanderers who venture too close to its lair. While this occurs, the Rainbow Serpent watches from a nearby hiding place and waits for opportunities to whisper suggestions (as per the spell) into the minds of the wanderers.

If a confrontation cannot be avoided, the Rainbow Serpent strikes once with its venom-dripping fangs. The bite inflicts minimal damage (1d4+1 points), but the venom is powerful. The poison automatically renders the victim unconscious for 1d4 hours unless a save vs. poison is made. Those who make the save suffer a –4 penalty to all die rolls for 1d4 hours.

This villain can turn ordinary staves and pole arms into shadow asps three times per day, using a power that is similar to the *sticks to snakes* spell. Magical staves and pole arms receive a saving throw vs. spell to resist the transformation, but normal items do not. Once transformed, an item is lost forever. Shadow asps are 1-foot-long coils of shadow. Their poison can turn victims into shadows.

Shadow Asp: Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 2; MV 3; HD 1/2 (1d4 hp); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SA shadow poison (save vs. poison or become shadow in 5 rounds), surprise; SD half damage from piercing weapons; SZ T (1-foot long); ML Fearless (19).

The Rainbow Serpent's lair is protected by dream spawn, dangerous plants, and a variety of nightmare versions of common reptiles that all serve the master deceiver. The Serpent can summon these creatures with a quiet hiss that causes them to respond in 1d4 rounds. If it stops to issue the summons, it can do nothing else in that round.

Habitat/Society: The Rainbow Serpent inhabits the Park Primeval in the center of the City of Nod. It slithers through the lush jungle maze cavorting with its reptile servants or nests in the branches of the Tree of Suspicion, turning its gaze toward the dreamscapes it controls.

Ecology: Like the other members of the Nightmare Court, the Rainbow Serpent draws energy from the dreams of others. In the Serpent's case, the most hearty dreams are those which involve insecurity and paranoia, where mistrust is rampant and any loved one could betrayer.

"Am I awake? Am I dreaming? By the sacred sword, when will this nightmare end?"

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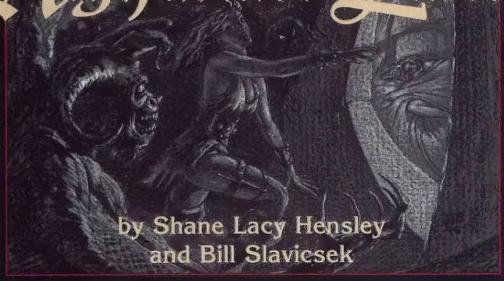
Campaign Expansion

the Nightmare Lands



by Shane Lacy Hensley
and Bill Slavicsek

It's just a bad dream—a very bad dream....

Beware the night, for sleep provides another path to the Demiplane of Dread. In the unique domain called the Nightmare Lands, darkness offers not blissful slumber, but ultimate terror. Heroes enter this realm at the bidding of the night, drawn from their dreaming bodies and captured by an enigmatic figure known only as the Nightmare Man. Trapped in this region of psychological fear, heroes face their worst nightmares in strange, surrealistic terrain. If they escape the treacherous clutches of dark slumber, they'll be safe–at least until the next time sleep overtakes them....

This boxed set contains everything necessary to adventure among dark dreamscapes and twisted nightmares, including:

- *The Journal of Dr. Illhousen:* 32 pages of notes and information on the Nightmare Lands, compiled by the chief physician of Nova Vaasa's infamous Clinic for the Mentally Distressed.
- *Rules of Dreams and Nightmares:* 64 pages full of rules dealing with adventuring in dreams and nightmares, setting up nightmare scenarios, and translating player characters into dreamscape versions of themselves.
- *Book of Nightmares:* 64 pages of ready-to-play nightmares that incorporates all of the information in this campaign expansion into one full-length adventure.
- *New Monsters:* 16 pages of never-before-seen creatures unique to the Nightmare Lands and the dimensions of dreams.
- *Poster Maps:* Two full-color, poster-sized maps of the Nightmare Lands and other locations described herein.

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